mountains that cut it off from the others. The Spartans' chief concern was with militarism and war so much so that the word 'spartan' is often used to mean militaristic. The Spartans trained their boys, from the age of seven, to endure hardship and pain, to be fierce, skilful fighters. This was their 'education'. All citizens able to bear arms were soldiers. They spent all their lives in barracks.

A large number of people living in the state of Sparta were slaves and it was they who did the work, leaving the citizens free to pursue the arts of war and government. The main duties of the Spartan kings were of a military nature. A council of nobles and an assembly supervised the work of administration, elected officials and controlled education. But Sparta's government was *by* and *for* the military. Only those citizens whose income qualified them for a certain military rank were members of the assembly.

Sparta's slave system ultimately resulted in the enslavement of the Spartans themselves. The slaves were always rebellious and the states had to strengthen its forces constantly to suppress them. No Spartan went out unarmed. Living from childhood to the age of 60 in barracks under the strictest discipline meant that Spartans had no time for family life or for learning. They did not allow trade and travel for fear that new ideas would destroy their system. Spartans were fine soldiers, but they contributed little else to Greek culture. Their poetry and songs concerned only military glory.

The State of Athens

The city-state of Athens developed along lines quite different from Sparta. The territories it ruled had been occupied gradually and peacefully and militarism had not developed. Athens had excellent harbours and mineral deposits. Athenians built a prosperous trade and a culture which was predominantly urban.

In the 7th century B.C. Athens' government changed from monarchy to oligarchy. In this period most of the fertile land passed into the hands of nobles. Many peasants mortgaged their lands and, later, themselves and their families to pay their debts. Ultimately they were deprived of their lands and reduced to the status of slaves.

3.13 Pericles

But, besides the nobles and slaves, Athens had some free people—the *demos*. They were free peasants, labourers, artisans and traders. Some of them were rich. All these were dissatisfied with the rule of the nobles. In 594 B.C., their struggle resulted in the appointment of Solon as the new magistrate with authority to carry out reforms. Solon abolished all mortgages, freed Athenians who had become slaves due to debts, and abolished enslavement of Athenians for debt. However, he did not free the slaves brought from other countries. Solon revived the assembly and all free Athenian men were members of it. The judicial system was reorganized and presiding officers of the law courts could be elected by the citizens.

Athenian democracy reached its greatest heights under the leadership of Pericles—469-429 B.C. A board of ten generals, elected by the assembly, acted as a kind of cabinet, such as we have today. Pericles was the president of this board for about 15 years. The generals were responsible to the assembly and thus could not become dictators. There were a number of popular courts, and cases were decided by juries whose members were drawn from all classes of citizens by lot.

Under Athenian democracy, political rights and freedoms were limited to the citizens. And during the time of Pericles, the citizens constituted a minority of the total population.

Wars and the End of Greek Democracy

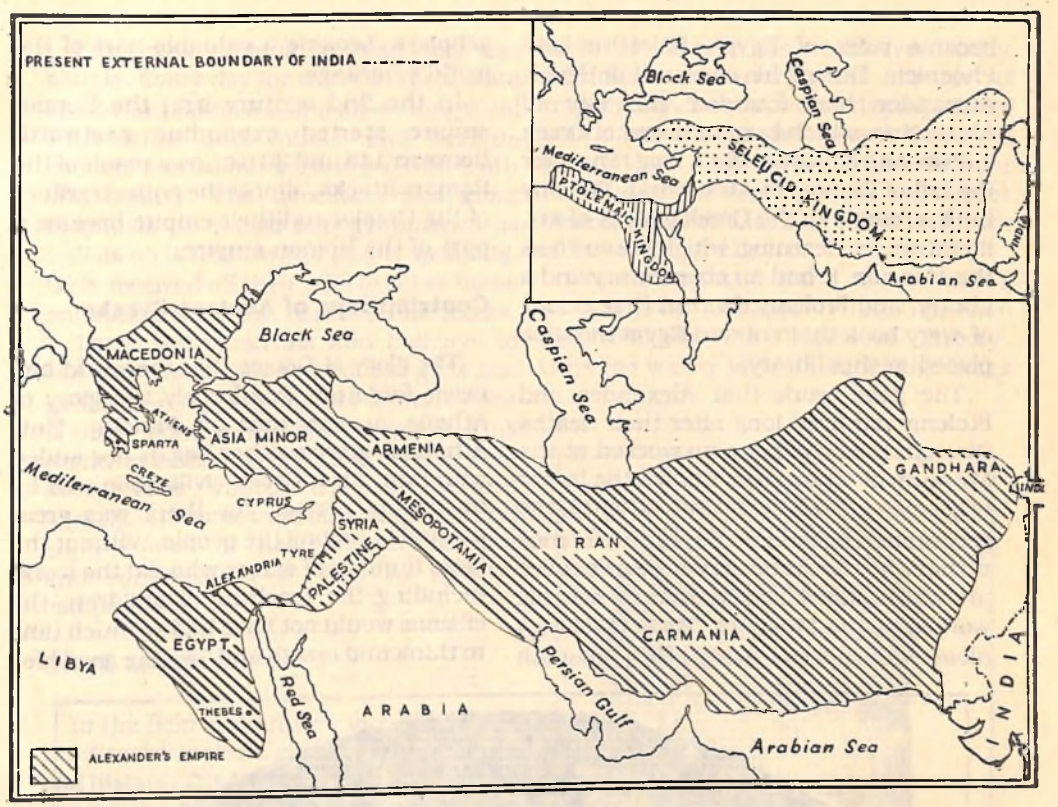
In the 5th century B.C., the Athenian democracy was engaged in two wars which spelled the end of its greatness. The first of these wars was against the large and powerful Iranian empire and its king, Darius. He had already conquered all the countries lying between the Indus and Asia Minor and came across the Aegean to conquer Greece. His large army supported by a vast fleet landed at Marathon near Athens. For the first time, the whole of Greece united to fight a common enemy. The Greek armies, though much smaller in number, fought fiercely and drove away the Iranians at the battle of Marathon in 490 B.C.

An Iranian army returned to punish the Greeks ten years later but met with little success. This time they were met at the pass of Thermopylae by a small band of Spartans, who defended the narrow pass to the last man. The Iranians burnt the city of Athens, but were finally compelled to withdraw. This war made Athens the dominant state of Greece.

The Peloponnesian war, between Athens and Sparta from 431 to 404 B.C., ended in tragedy for Athens. During the wars with Iran, Athens had formed a league with a number of other Greek states. After the war she transformed this league into a naval empire for the advancement of her own interests. Spartans were afraid of her growing power. There had always been hostility between Sparta and Athens. At this time, most of the Greek states joined one side or the other, and the long war ended in the defeat of Athens and the destruction of her democracy. Athens became a subject state of Sparta. The Peloponnesian war marked the beginning of the end of the 'Glory that was Greece'. The following years were full of fighting that exhausted the Greek states.

Alexander's Empire

Philip of Macedonia conquered most of



The territorial waters of India extend into the sea to a distance of twelve nautical miles measured from the appropriate base line.

Alexander's Empire. The inset shows the Hellenistic world in the 3rd century B.C.

the states in the years following Athens' defeat. Then his son, Alexander, inherited his armies and set out—at the age of 20—to conquer the world. During the thirteen years from 336 to 323 B.C., he compelled all Greece to accept his leadership and conquered the Achaemenid empire, the largest and the most powerful at the time. This brought him to the borders of India where he defeated king Porus on the Jhelum in 326 B.C. He sailed down the Indus and then returned to Mesopotamia where he died of fever in 323 B.C. at the age of 32.

Alexander's conquests brought many important changes to the world. Trade between Europe and Asia was developed. Many new cities were founded.

When Alexander died, his generals divided his empire among themselves. General Seleucus who got Iran, Mesopotamia and Syria, later attacked India but was defeated by Chandragupta Maurya. But this war led to the establishment of friendly relations between the Seleucid empire and the Mauryan empire.

Ptolemy, another general of Alexander,

became ruler of Egypt, Palestine and Phoenicia. During his conquest of Egypt, Alexander had founded the city of Alexandria, which became a seat of Greek culture and education for a long time after the fall of Greece. In Alexandria, Ptolemy built a temple to the Greek godess of art, literature and learning, which is known as the *Museum*. It had an observatory and a library, and Ptolemy decreed that a copy of every book that entered Egypt must be placed in this library.

The good work that Alexander and Ptolemy did lived long after their deaths through the scholars who worked at the Museum of Alexandria. Euclid, the father of geometry, lived here; Eratosthenes, the geographer, calculated the circumference of the earth; Archimedes whose principles are still studied by children in schools worked at the Museum. Their teachings along with those of many other Museum scholars, became a valuable part of the world's heritage.

In the 2nd century B.C., the Roman empire started expanding eastward. Between 146 and 30 B.C., as a result of the Roman attacks, almost the entire territory of the Greeks and their empire became a part of the Roman empire.

Contributions of Ancient Greeks

The glory of Greece that the world has never forgotten was largely the glory of Athens at the time of Pericles. But, Athenian glory neither began nor ended with him. Also, Greek civilization was by no means perfect, for there was great inequality among the people. Without the large number of slaves who did the work, including the teaching of children, the citizens would not have had so much time to think and create and 'live the good life'.

3.14 Greek education. This painting on the 5th century B.C. bowl shows a boy learning to play the lyre and another boy reciting Homer's *Iliad*.

For Greek citizens life was easy and simple. Every day for the men there were sports and exercises, and an evening meal with wine and music and serious conversation about life and politics, truth and beauty. The education laid great emphasis on music and gymnastics as well as on literature and public speaking. Girls received all their education at home and took little, if any, part in public affairs.

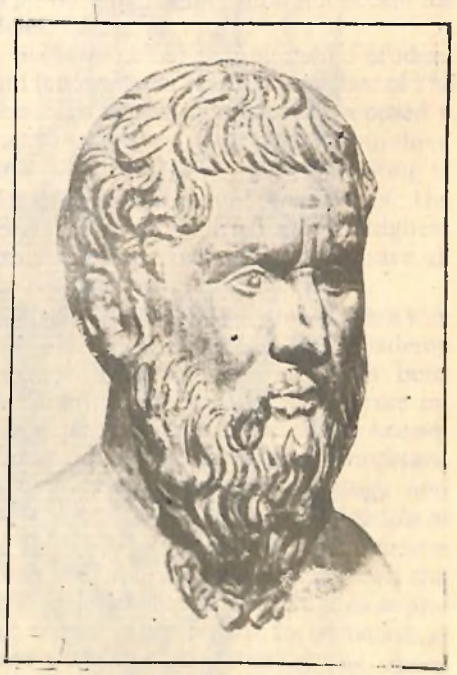
There were festivals and holidays to celebrate marriages and honour gods and goddesses. The world still celebrates one of them, namely the Olympic games. This event, to honour the god Zeus, was held every four years. Spectators and participants came from all over Greece and enjoyed open-air theatre, poetry reading and conversation as well as athletic competitions.

Greek Literature

In the field of literature our 'gifts' from the Greeks include epics, poetry, drama and history. The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are among the best epics of the world. The shorter Greek poems called *lyrics*, because they were sung to the music of the lyre, were composed to express the emotions of man. Sappho, the great woman poet, sang of the beauty of love and nature. Pindar, one of the greatest of the lyric poets, wrote poems to honour victorious athletes.

It was in drama—both tragedies and comedies—that the Greek literary achievement was supreme. The remains of Greek theatres can still be seen all over the Aegean region. The founder of Greek tragedy was Aeschylus, author of *Prometheus Bound*. Sophocles is considered the greatest of the Greek tragedians. He wrote *Oedipus Rex*, *Antigone* and *Electra*, plays which are admired all over the world even today. Euripides, another great master of tragedy, condemned war and sympathized with slaves and common people. One of his best-known plays is the *Trojan Women*. Aristophanes, the master of Greek comedy, ridiculed leading citizens in front of fun-loving audiences.

Greece produced some of the world's earliest great histories. Herodotus, often described as the 'father of history', travelled widely to write about the Greek wars with Iran. Thucydides described the war between Sparta and Athens. Plutarch, who wrote later, is known for his famous biographies, *Lives of Illustrious Men*.



3.15 Herodotus

Philosophy—Many schools of philosophy developed in Greece. One of these schools rejected the myths and superstitions about the nature of the physical world and attempted to give a rational explanation of it. Another school of philosophers believed that all matter was composed of atoms and that the

3.16 Raphael's painting of Plato and Socrates

differences in arrangement of these atoms resulted in different forms of life. The greatest philosopher of this school was Democritus who denied the existence of a spiritual world, or of the soul. Then there were the Sophists, meaning 'those who are wise'. Sophists believed that there was no absolute truth, but looked at every so-called truth in relation to its effect on human beings. 'Man is the measure of all things', they said. Their contribution to the growth of philosophy is great. In the words of a great Roman thinker, they 'brought philosophy down from heaven to the dwellings of men'.

The most famous philosophers of Greece were Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. Socrates believed that knowledge leads to right conduct and happiness, while ignorance breeds evil. He criticised the popular beliefs of the Athenians. After the defeat of Athens in the Peloponnesian war, he was condemned to die on the charge of 'corrupting the youth and introducing new gods' and was forced to drink poison. Actually, he merely encouraged them to question everything. His courageous words at his trial have inspired martyrs for centuries. The Greeks in power at this time could not accept his ideas.

3.17 Socrates' death from a 17th century book published in England

Socrates' most distinguished student and follower was Plato, the author of *The Republic*. In this book Plato proposed a society which would be divided into three classes – the lowest class consisting of farmers, artisans and merchants, the second class of soldiers, and the highest class of intellectuals who would have all the political power.

The greatest of Greek philosophers was Aristotle, a student at the Academy founded by Plato. Aristotle was both philosopher and scientist and wrote on many subjects. He studied all the known sciences of his time and made important contributions to medicine, biology and astronomy. He believed in the principle of the Golden Mean, that is, neither extreme luxury nor self-denial. He advocated the same principle in his political philosophy and wanted government to be based at some point between rule by the upper class and democracy.

Two important schools of philosophy later were Stoicism and Epicureanism. The Stoic school taught that man should accept his fate, since he cannot change it. According to the Stoics, serenity of mind is the goal all men should strive to attain.

They preached indifference to pleasure or pain, good or evil, but believed in the brotherhood of all men. Epicureans believed that the highest good for man is pleasure, but they aimed at tranquillity of mind rather than indulgence in pleasures. They believed that the gods had nothing to do with the affairs of men. They taught people to lead simple, virtuous and fearless lives in order to be happy.

Science—To the Greeks, science and philosophy were almost one because most philosophers tried to explain the nature of the physical world. The Greeks made many contributions to mathematics, especially to geometry as is seen in the work of Euclid and Pythagoras. In medicine, Hippocrates laid the foundations of modern medicine by insisting that 'every disease has a natural cause, and without natural causes, nothing ever happens'. He is known as the 'father of medicine'.

Many advances in science were made after Alexander's conquests. Aristarchus propounded the theory that the earth and other planets revolve round the sun. However, Ptolemy's belief that the earth was the centre of the universe was accepted as truth until the 16th century. Hipparchus made an approximately correct calculation of the diameter of the moon and the distance between the earth

3.18 The universe according to Ptolemy. Ptolemy's theory that the earth was the centre of the universe remained popular in Europe till the 16th century

3.19 The Parthenon

3.20. Inscription of the 'Law against Tyranny', Athens, 336 B.C. The inscription reads : Should anyone, in an attempt at absolute power, rise up against the people or try to overthrow the democracy of Athens—whoever kills him shall be blameless.

and the moon. Eratosthenes calculated the circumference of the earth with a small error of about 320 kilometres. He also prepared a fairly accurate map of the globe and was the first to suggest that one could reach India from Europe by sailing west. Columbus used a map based on his ideas hundreds of years later.

In medicine, Alexandria became the great centre of study. Herophilus described the brain in detail and the function of arteries in the circulation of blood. Doctors practised dissection of human bodies for the first time and obtained a great deal of knowledge about human anatomy.

Art and Architecture—The excellence of Greek architecture and sculpture is best illustrated in their temples. Greek temples had a chamber which was used to house the statue of the god, and the chamber was surrounded by columns. The style of columns with different kinds of capitals was a special feature of the temples. These temples are also famous for their harmony of proportions. The temple to Athena, the Parthenon, is the best example of Greek architecture.

In sculpture, the Greeks expressed the values they admired in human beings like beauty and courage. They portrayed well-built, noble and muscular bodies to portray the beauty of man. The sculptures were mostly of gods and athletes but even gods were portrayed as human beings. Myron and Phidias are two best-known sculptors of ancient Greece. Myrôn is famous for his statue of the discus thrower; Phidias for his statue of Hermes holding the infant Dionysus. It was Phidias whom Pericles appointed to supervise the construction of the Acropolis in Athens.

The achievements of ancient Greeks are an important component of the heritage of mankind. They gave the world 'beauty' and

an example of freedom— freedom to think, speak and write all that man's mind can conceive; freedom to believe or not to believe; freedom to delight in living.

THE ROMAN CIVILIZATION

The Roman civilization, centred in Italy, is often considered a kind of bridge. Over this bridge the ideas of the Greeks and the civilizations farther east 'travelled' to Europe.

The Earliest Italians

The first inhabitants of Italy came from North Africa, Spain and France. After 2000 B.C. groups of Indo-Eurpoeans started migrating from over the Alps. Later, a number of Greeks settled in south Italy. A group of people known as the Etruscans also settled in a part of Italy. The people of Italy were the descendants of all these people.

The early Italians learned much from the Greeks— their alphabet, their religious beliefs and art. The name *Italia* itself was Greek. The Roman civilization started developing around the 6th century B.C. and reached its peak after the Greek civilization declined.

Early History of Rome

The city of Rome was founded about 1000 B.C. in the district of Latium, south of the Tiber river. The language of the ancient Romans, *Latin*, gets its name from Latium. Rome with its citadel on a high hill became dominant in the region.

The early Romans had a king, an assembly and a senate. The assembly consisted of all the male citizens of military age. The senate composed of heads of clans, was a powerful body and could veto any proposals of the king and the assembly.

Towards the end of the 6th century B.C. the king was overthrown and a republic was established. Under the republic the Romans conquered other parts of the peninsula, and by 265 B.C. controlled all of Italy.

The political system of the Roman republic consisted of two *consuls*, the senate and the assembly. The consuls were elected by the assembly for a period of two years. The senate was a powerful body and could veto the acts of the assembly. It also controlled public funds. The consuls led the armies in war, enforced laws and served as judges.

Roman society was divided into two classes— patricians and plebeians. The patricians were the upper class and consisted of the aristocracy and big landlords who controlled the senate. The plebeians were the workers, small farmers, artisans, small traders and soldiers. The plebeians had few rights. They were forced to pay heavy taxes and were often punished. In the beginning of the 5th century B.C. they revolted and the patricians were forced to grant them some concessions. They won the right to elect *tribunes* who could veto the acts of the consuls and the senate, that concerned the plebeians.

Another victory for the plebeians was the codification of laws in 454 B.C. The laws were written on tablets of wood and were known as the Laws of Twelve Tables. This enabled more people to know their legal rights and to resist violations of the laws by officials.

Wars with Carthage

The desire for new lands, after the

conquest of Italy, led the Romans into a series of wars with Carthage, a city on the north coast of Africa. Carthage was founded by the Phoenicians in the 9th century B.C., but had become independent. The Carthaginians controlled the trade from Egypt, Greece, Spain and other Mediterranean countries. Carthage had inherited the achievements of the Phoenicians who were skilful sailors and carriers of ideas. It was from the Phoenicians, through the Greeks, that the Romans got the capital letters of their alphabet. These are used even today.

Rivalry over Sicily brought Carthage and Rome to war. Sicily had fertile land and some Greek settlements were flourishing there. The danger of Carthaginian occupation of Sicily led the Romans to attack Carthage. The wars that followed, known as the Punic Wars, lasted from 264 to 146 B.C. The Carthaginians under their brave general Hannibal were defeated, the Romans set the city on fire and sold thousands of Carthaginians into slavery.

By the beginning of the Ist century B.C. the Romans had conquered Greece and Asia Minor and established a protectorate over Egypt.

Impact of Wars on Roman Society

All these wars had a very bad effect on Roman civilization. Because of the lakhs of people from the conquered territories who were sold in slavery, Rome became largely a society of slaves and slave-holders. Slaves were employed in agriculture, mining, road-building, workshops and on ships. They were brutally exploited and many became cripples at a young age. The luxuries of the Romans were based on this exploitation.

3.21 Inhuman tortures were inflicted on the slaves for minor offences. A common instruments of torture was the pillory. This was a wooden frame with holes in which the head and hands of slaves were locked.

The rich vied with one another in vulgar display of wealth and this led to the moral decay of the whole society. Fights between *gladiators*, or between a gladiator and a wild animal, became a popular Roman amusement. Special arenas or amphitheatres were built for these contests. The ruins of the Colosseum, one of the greatest of the arenas, can be seen in Rome.

This period of Roman history was full of trouble and conspiracy. There were revolts of the Roman poor who had lost their lands to the rich Romans. The tribunes elected by the people tried to put a limit on the land which a Roman could own and to distribute the rest among the landless Romans. However, they did not succeed, though many lost their lives in this effort. There were also slave uprisings in this period. The most important revolt by the slaves was that led by Spartacus in 73 B.C. About 70,000 slaves revolted and it took the highly trained Roman armies more than a year to suppress them. Thousands of the slaves who survived the defeat were massacred. Because of his bravery, Spartacus has become the subject of many heroic stories.

Wars naturally increased the political power of the army generals. The power of the assembly gradually declined and army

3.22 The Colosseum, Rome. This huge amphitheatre was built in the first century A.D. for staging bloody fights between gladiators and wild beasts.

leaders became more important. After the suppression of the great slave revolt, rivalry for power grew between two generals, Pompey and Julius Caesar. War between them followed and Pompey was murdered by his enemies in Egypt. Caesar remained in Egypt for some time, attracted by the captivating beauty of the Egyptian queen, Cleopatra. On his return to Rome, in 46 B.C., he made himself dictator. However, on the charge that Caesar intended to become king, he was assassinated in 44 B.C., in a senate meeting.

The Roman Empire

After the assassination of Caesar, power passed into the hands of Mark Antony and Lapidus, Caesar's friends, and Octavian, Caesar's grand-nephew. They attempted to hunt down all those who had conspired against Caesar. The leaders of the conspiracy, Brutus and Cassius, fled and organized a large army, but they were captured and slain.

In 37 B.C. Octavian became the most powerful man in the Roman empire. He ruled the Roman empire for 44 years under the titles of *Augustus*, which meant 'holy', and *Imperator*, meaning 'victorious general'. He also called himself Princeps, 'first citizen of the State'. The period of Roman history beginning with his rule up to A.D. 284 is called the Principate. He introduced many much-needed reforms. He reorganized the government of the conquered territories, stopped corruption and plunder, and strengthened law and order. His rule and the period following it were peaceful and are known in history as *Pax Romana*, which means 'Roman Peace'.

Most of the successors of Augustus were tyrants. One of the few capable ones was Marcus Aurelius who was in office from A.D. 161 to 180. He was an able general, philosopher and administrator. But his successors were incompetent—and there were many of them. In a period of 50 years, 26 different persons became rulers, and 25 of them were killed by conspirators. Finally, in A.D. 284, when Diocletian became ruler, he destroyed even the semblance of republican government. People were required to prostrate themselves in his presence. The senate lost all authority and the imperator or emperor became absolute.

From this time on, Roman civilization

The Roman Empire at its Greatest Extent

declined more rapidly. One of Diocletian's successors, Constantine, built a new capital called Constantinople on the site of ancient Byzantium. Not long after, the Roman empire was divided into two empires—Eastern and Western. The eastern part, as you will read in Chapter 5, was called the Byzantine empire. The Western part soon broke into many pieces. By A.D. 476 a chief of the barbarian invaders from the north established himself as 'King of Rome', and the once powerful empire was no more.

Life and Culture of the Romans

The early Romans lived mostly on agriculture and raised sheep and cattle. They made their own clothes from flax and wool, and used utensils of clay or wood. The Romans, like the Greeks and the Indo-Aryans, wore simple clothing. They attached great importance to family life. Every family worshipped Vesta, goddess of the hearth, who guarded the home. Though the father and husband had supreme authority in the family, the

Romans honoured their women, who took part freely in politics and the business of their husbands.

The Romans worshipped as many gods and goddesses as the Greeks. Jupiter sent rain for the crops; Mars helped them in war; Juno protected their women; Mercury carried their messages.

With the conquests of large parts of the world, the character of Roman life underwent important changes. The Roman society was now divided into four main classes—the aristocracy who owned large estates and held high public offices; wealthy merchants and bankers; the plebeians, small independent farmers and city-dwellers, many without work; and slaves who were the real producers.

In course of time, most middle class Romans started hating work and considered it fit only for slaves. They demanded support from the state. When Julius Caesar came to power, 320,000 Romans were being supported by the state. The condition of life for the slaves was very harsh. After long hours of work, they were often locked in prisons. Many wore heavy iron shackles even while they worked and slept. Some slaves fared better—for example, those who served as valets to the aristocrats, or as musicians and tutors. Some of them were highly accomplished and better educated than their masters.

The upper classes, the aristocracy and the merchants, lived in palatial houses and spent much of their time in luxurious baths, feasting and entertainment. City mobs as well as aristocrats attended gladiatorial contests and chariot races. Candidates for office often organized gladiatorial 'shows' to amuse and get votes for themselves. The life of a defeated gladiator depended on the spectators, who usually urged by shouting that the winner kill him. Both gladiatorial contests and chariot races were bloody affairs.

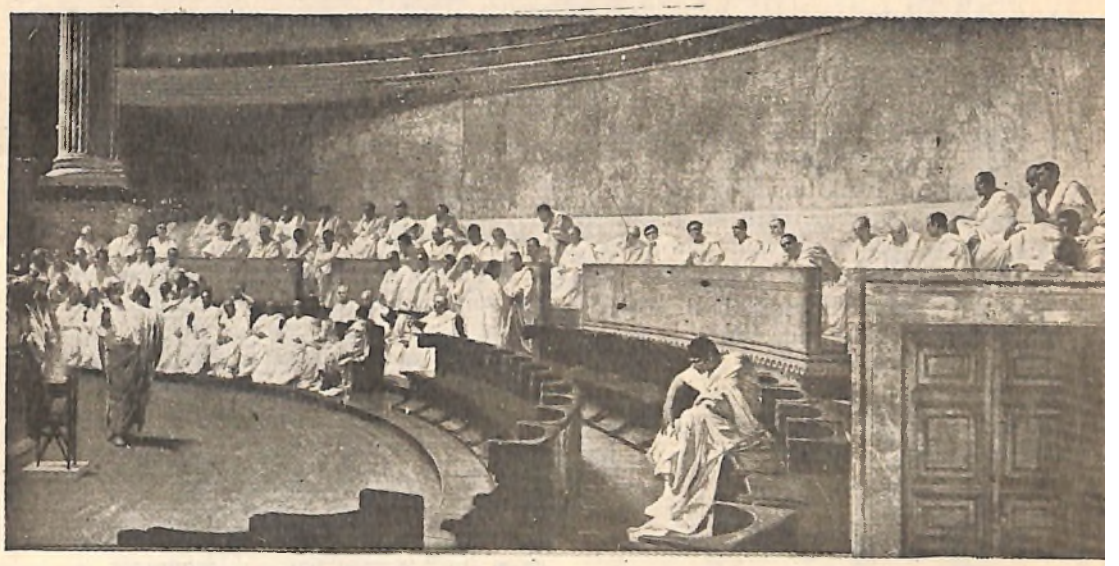
Contribution of the Romans

Roman conquests included Egypt, Babylon and Greece as well as western Europe and north Africa. Thus Romans and the western world became heirs to the achievements of eastern civilizations. The Romans made some contributions of their own, while making use of the ideas they inherited.

Laws and Government—Roman law and principles of governance are Rome's greatest contribution to the world. This achievement began with the Law of the Twelve Tables. In course of time Roman law developed into three main branches—civil law, applicable to Roman citizens; peoples law, applicable to all inhabitants of the empire; and natural law, which had more to do with philosophy than court cases. Many countries have borrowed from Roman ideas in developing their own systems of laws.

It was largely their system of law and administration that enabled the Romans to do what the Greeks could not do-to maintain order over a vast empire from a central government. Laws encouraged travel and boosted trade. The roads, built primarily for the movement of armies, were now used for exchanging goods with distant parts of the world, including China and India. Arikamedu near Madras was a Roman trading post in India. So complete was Rome's system of roads linking all parts of the empire that people could say 'All roads lead to Rome'. New cities grew along these routes, from Britain and Spain to Babylon.

The idea of republicanism was



3.23 A Senate meeting. The Senate was the most powerful Roman institution taking decisions affecting the lives of millions. This 19th century painting by Maccari shows Cicero speaking.

developed by the Romans. The idea was so strong that for a long time, the Roman rulers did not dare to assume royal titles, but called themselves servants of the state. For centuries, the senate and assembly were maintained in form even though Rome was ruled by tyrants. Of course the practice of enslaving conquered peoples soon destroyed any trends towards real democracy.

Language, Philosophy and Literature

The Romans developed their own alphabet after the Greeks, and the Latin language became the language of all educated people in western Europe. Latin words are still widely used in science, and Latin is the basis of several European languages—especially French, Spanish and Italian.

The Romans also adopted Greek philosophies. Epicureanism and Stoicism were popular in Rome. Lucretius, author of the poem, *On the Nature of Things*, was an Epicurean philosopher. He regarded belief in supernatural powers as a barrier to spiritual peace. He also did not believe in the existence of a soul, but advocated 'peace and pure heart' and not pleasure.

Cicero, a famous orator, believed, like the Stoics, in tranquillity of mind as the highest good and advocated indifference to pain and suffering. One of his most important contributions was his concept of political and natural law. Natural law, according to Cicero, was a law which could be discovered by reason and which guaranteed natural rights to all human beings. His speeches in the senate, are still imitated for its excellent style.

Marcus Aurelius, the Roman emperor about whom you have read earlier, was a Stoic philosopher. He wrote a book, *Meditations*, which explains his thoughts on how life should be lived. He believed that the purpose of life was not pleasure

but equanimity, which means the ability to live with reason and self-control in any situation. He practised what he taught. Though he had supreme power and unlimited wealth, he never lived in luxury. He wrote, "If any man is able to show me that I do not think or act rightly, I will change; for I seek the truth. He is injured who abides in error and ignorance." Another famous Stoic philosopher was Seneca who believed that all that happens is ordained by an all-powerful Providence and is always for the good.

The Roman civilization developed its literature and is noted for many achievements in poetry. Horace, in his poetry, combined the philosophical attitudes of Epicureanism and Stoicism. The following are a few lines from his *Odes.*

> Be brave in trouble; meet distress
> With dauntless front; but when the gale
> Too prosperous blows, be wise no less
> And shorten sail.

Virgil, another great poet, is famous for his *Aeneid*, written in the style of the Greek epics, *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. The *Aeneid* describes the wanderings and adventures of Aeneas, a legendary hero of Troy. Tacitus was the most famous Roman historian who, in his *Annals* and *Histories*, described the anarchy and corruption of the times in which he lived.

Art and Architecture— The Romans were great builders. Their achievements in architecture and engineering were second only to their work in law and administration. They were the inventors of concrete and could firmly cement bricks and stones together. They also introduced

3.24 The Trajan's Column, Rome. The column was built in A.D. 113 to commemorate Trajan's victories.

3.25 Details from the Trajan's column showing a battle scene

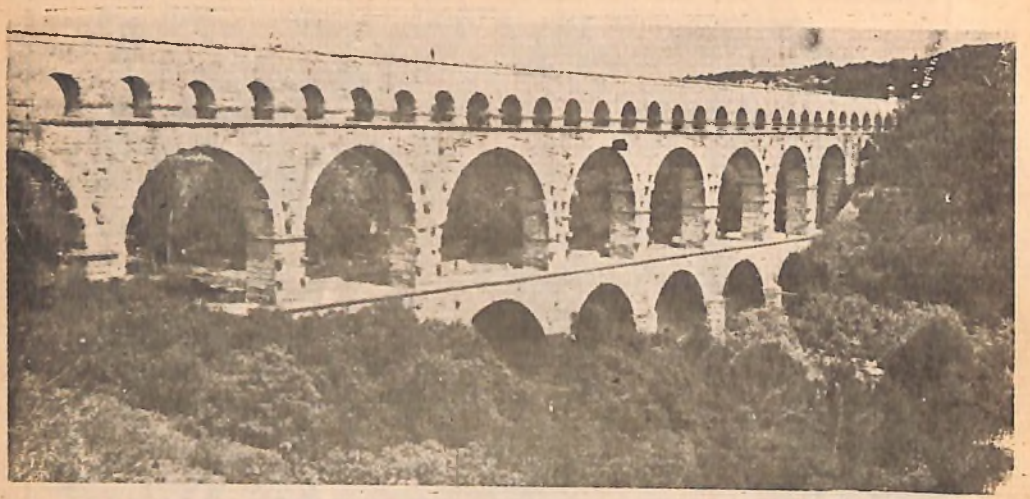
two architectural improvements—the arch and cupolas or domes. The Roman buildings often rose to two or three storeys with one row of arches standing over another. Their arch was round and was used in city gates, bridges, buildings, and monuments to victory. It was used in the Colosseum where gladiatorial contests were held and in aqueducts, many of which are still standing.

The Cupola which was a ceiling in the form of a huge inverted bowl can be seen in the Pantheon in Rome.

Water systems and roads are examples of Roman engineering. At the beginning of the Christian era, Rome had a population of about a million inhabitants. To provide water to the people in Rome and other cities, the Romans laid water-pipes from springs in the mountains which sloped down to the city. Some of these pipes were as long as 70 kilometres.

The Romans developed their sculpture on Greek models. But there was a difference. While the Greeks made their sculptures to depict their ideals, the Romans made use of the art to portray men as they were. Buildings were decorated with statues and reliefs. The Romans not only depicted the physical features truthfully but also character. However, much of the sculpture depicted emperors, and was placed in city squares as symbols of their authority and power. The Romans also developed the art of painting murals—large pictures covering entire walls.

Science—The Romans did some



3.26 The Pont-du-Gard. This was a 40 km long aqueduct through which water was carried to the city of Nimes in France.

3.27 A marble relief of about A.D. 200, depicting Neptune, the Roman god of the sea, between two ships.

pioneering work in public services. They were the first to provide free medicine to poor patients. Except for these, they did not make any important contribution to science. Pliny the Elder and the Stoic philosopher Seneca each compiled an encyclopaedia. These, however, did not contain any original contributions. In medicine, Celsus wrote a treatise that contained information on surgery. Galen, a Greek scientist living in Italy, compiled a medical encyclopaedia and did some research of his own. He was one of the first to discover the circulation of blood.

Another contribution was the Roman calendar, which is still widely used with minor changes. However, there was nothing original in this calendar, as the groundwork in this field had been done earlier by the Egyptians and the Chinese. The names of some months in the present western calendar are derived from the names of Caesars. The month of July is named after Julius Caesar, August after Augustus, September, October, November and December are derived from Latin words meaning seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth. The names were apposite when first used because the Roman New Year began in March.

Why the Roman Civilization Decayed

The causes of decay of the Roman civilization are all related to imperialism. Imperialism destroyed democracy, encouraged slavery, created idle city mobs and political conflicts and corruption. Neither agriculture nor industry could thrive on slave labour. Slaves could have no interest in production that was all for the aristocrats and big landowners. No army, however powerful, could make them productive and prevent revolts.

3.28 Roman Emperor Constantine

The coming of Christian religion to Rome played a part in weakening the rule of emperors of a slave state. Christianity with its ideals of equality and love had great appeal for Rome's oppressed people. So great was its attraction that believers were willing to endure persecution by the emperors and even die for their faith. Constantine, in the 4th century A.D., was the first ruler to allow Christians to build churches and worship openly rather than in secret.

The final blow to the Roman empire came at the hands of northern invaders. They were German tribes— Goths, Franks, Visigoths, Vandals. They had long been making raids on Roman outposts, then on the city of Rome itself. Finally, in A.D. 476 Vandals overthrew the emperor who ruled the western empire and their chieftain established himself as king.

JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY

You have already read about religions and religious beliefs of the people in ancient India, Iran, China, Greece and Italy. Some of these religions, for example Buddhism, spread to areas far away from the land of their origin and influenced the life and culture in many countries. Two major religions arose in West Asia in ancient times and played an important part in world history. They are Judaism and Christianity. Both these religions arose in Palestine.

Judaism

Judaism is the religion of the Jews or the Hebrew people. The Hebrews were settled in Mesopotamia under the leadership of Abraham. From there they gradually migrated to Palestine. After 1700 B.C. many Hebrew tribes went to Egypt following a famine in Palestine. They were oppressed by the ruler of Egypt and, under the leadership of Moses, they migrated to Palestine in the 13th century B.C. Before Moses,the Hebrew tribes had a variety of gods. Moses united the different tribes, who now became the worshippers of Yahweh, or Jehovah, as their God. Moses' Ten Commandments, believed to have been revealed to him by God, laid down belief in a single God as well as laws to guide the life of 'the Chosen People', as the Hebrews called themselves.

In Palestine, the Hebrews established a united state with a monarchical form of government. The capital of the state was built at Jerusalem. It is interesting to note that the city of Jerusalem became a holy place to three major world religions—Judasim, Christianity and Islam. One of the famous kings of the Hebrews was Solomon, the legendary wise and just ruler. The united state of the Hebrews later split into two separate kingdoms Israel and Judah. By the 6th century B.C., both the kingdoms had been conquered, Israel by the Assyrians and Judah by the Babylonians. During the following centuries, Palestine was first conquered by the Iranians and later by Alexander. It later came under Roman influence and became a Roman province in A.D. 70. In this period, a large number of Jews left Palestine and settled in different parts of the world.

Religious Beliefs—The basic doctrine of Judaism is the belief in one God, Yahweh, who is represented as loving His people but visiting them with His vengeance when they go astray. Some later prophets of the Jews proclaimed that God loves man and is always ready to forgive a sinner who repents. Judaism preaches justice, mercy and humility. One of the important beliefs of the Jews is that the Messiah will one day appear on earth, purify the Hebrews and cleanse the world of sin and wickedness. While the Christians believe that Jesus was this Messiah and call him 'Christ', the Jews believe the Messiah has not yet come. Judaism paved the way for the later monotheistic religions of Christianity and Islam.

Hebrew Scriptures—The sacred books of Judaism form the Old Testament and the Apocrypha. These books contain the history of the Jews and lay down the religious laws and ethics which they must follow. They also contain myths, legends and works of poetry as well as facts on medicine and astronomy. These works are considered sacred both by the Jews and the Christians.

Christianity

The founder of the Christian religion

was a Jew named Jesus, born at Bethlehem near Jerusalem. The name of his mother was Mary. Not much is known of Jesus till he was about 30 years of age. It was then that he went about preaching his message in simple words and in the form of stories that the common man could understand. He also came to be known as a great healer. His simple life, magnetic personality and outstanding love and compassion for all drew large numbers of people around him.

Jesus was fearless in criticizing the actions he considered evil and this created enemies among the rich and influential people. Some of these complained to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Palestine, that Jesus called himself King of the Jews and was thus inciting them to rebel against the Roman rulers. He was then arrested and sentenced to death on a cross. This explains why the cross came to be a sacred symbol for Christians. They believe that Jesus rose from the dead on the third day after crucifixion. This is known as the *Resurrection*, and Easter is celebrated every year in memory of that event. *Good Friday* is the day on which Jesus is believed to have been crucified. After Resurrection Jesus appeared to his disciples and other people for forty days and finally ascended to heaven. *Christmas* celebrates his birth.

The Christian era starts with A.D. 1, which, according to tradition, is the year of Jesus's birth. 'A.D.', or *Anno Domini* means 'in the year of the Lord'. In truth, the exact date of Jesus's birth is not known and scholars think that he was born either some years before A.D. 1 or some years after. However, 'B.C.', which means 'Before Christ', has come to be commonly used in designating dates before Jesus's birth.

Jesus very often spoke of the Kingdom of God by which he meant that the authority of God was the supreme power on earth. He said that the Kingdom of God was at hand and could be built up by man, purified by love of God and complete faith in Him. He referred to God as Father and called himself 'Son of God'. He loved his fellow men and taught people to love their neighbours.

According to Christian teachings, Jesus Christ was born on earth to serve God's purpose, and lived and died a painful death to redeem man from sin. The Christians believe that Jesus lived after death and, therefore, held out hope to man, who can always repent, seek God's grace and be saved.

The simple teachings of Jesus entered the people's hearts and infused into them faith and courage. Gradually, Christianity gained strength in Rome where the Bishop of St. Peter's Church came to be looked upon as Jesus Christ's representative on earth and was called the 'Pope' or 'Father'. The Roman emperor, Constantine, is said to have embraced Christianity. By the end of the 4th century, Christianity became the official religion of the Roman empire. The Christian Church by this time had begun to be organized on hierarchical lines.

The Bible

The holy book of Christianity is the Bible, which means 'the Book'. The Bible has two parts: the 'Old Testment', which is the history of the religious beliefs of the Jews, and the 'New Testament', which contains the biography and teachings of Jesus Christ. The 'Old Testament' was originally written in Hebrew, the language of the Jews, and later translated into Greek. The English version of the Bible in

common use now was prepared in the early 17th century under the royal command of the English King James I.

It is not possible to say precisely when the ancient period of human history came to an end. Very broadly one can say that during the second half of the first millenium A.D., important changes began to take place in the social and economic life of many areas of the world. These changes were so far-reaching that they can be said to have marked the beginning of a new era in history. However, these changes were neither similar nor was their pace the same all over the world. In some areas, the changes were very marked and were accompanied by serious political convulsions.

You have seen how the Roman empire in the west was destroyed as a result of barbarian invasions. The slave system which had been a major feature of the Roman civilization also disappeared. In some other areas, the changes that occurred did not mark as sharp a break with the past as was the case with the Roman civilization. However, whatever the nature and pace of changes, the social, economic and political systems that began to emerge after roughly A.D. 500 were very different from those in the preceding period. You will read about some of these in Chapter 5.

In some areas, the achievements of ancient civilizations formed the basis of further developments. In others, as in western Eurpoe, the achievements of Greek and Roman civilizations were forgotten, to be discovered after about a thousand years. In the following period, many new centres of civilization developed. Some of the achievements of the ancient civilizations were incorporated in the cultures of these new centres of civilization and from there passed on to other areas.

EXERCISES

Things to know

1. Describe the importance of iron in the growth of civilization.
2. Name the civilization to which each of the following leaders belonged and mention one or more of his special identifying achievements:
   Pericles, Julius Caesar, Emperor of Chin, Cleisthenes, Confucius, Chandragupta I, Augustus, Asoka, Marcus Aurelius, Harsh, Solon, Darius I, Adarshar, Zarathustra.
3. Give the name of the person and/or civilization responsible for the cultural advances as reflected in the following works of literature and art and describe them briefly: *Atharvaveda*, *Iliad*, Ajanta, Acropolis, Parthenon, *Upanishads*, *Aeneid*, *Oedipus Rex*, *Panchatantra*, *Dharma Sastras*, *The Republic*, Hermes and Dionysus, *Meditations*, Pantheon, *Avesta-e-Zend*.
4. Cite evidences or examples of the Romans' contributions to law and government. What special achievement in government should be credited to the Greeks? What achievement to the Han emperors?
5. Describe the contributions of the Iranian civilization in the field of art and architecture.

6. What are the evidences— specific objects, places and/or individuals— that people in the ancient civilizations were beginning more and more to replace superstitions about nature, health and disease with more knowledge of science?
7. Explain the meaning of the following terms:
   Hellenes, tyrant, demos, democracy, oligarchy, republic, lyric, patrician, plebeian, monarchy, matriarchy, patriarchy, *Pax Romana, shrenis, sudras, seismology, mandarin.*

Things to do

1. Make a list of the peoples who invaded India between 1500 B.C. and A.D. 600. Explain how these invasions influenced India's culture.
2. Prepare an outline map of Europe, Asia and North Africa. Locate on it the principal cities of ancient times and show how products and ideas may have travelled from East to West and West to East.
3. Write a 500-word paper under one of the following titles:
   The Progress of Man from 1200 B.C. to A.D. 600 or
   The Ancient Peoples, Their Ideas, Discoveries and Inventions (include both those developed by them and those adapted from others).

Things to think about and discuss

1. Compare the religions of the Iranians, Greeks, Romans, Indians and Chinese of ancient times. Discuss the common points in these religions and Judaism and Christainity.
2. Review the class divisions that existed in the societies of the five civilizations. What differences and similarities do you note?
3. Assuming that the following pairs of people could have met each other, what mutually interesting topic do you think they would discuss?

Plato and Confucius	Charaka and Hippocrates
Ssu-ma Chien and Herodotus	Kalidasa and Horace
The Buddha and Spartacus	Ashvaghosha and Aeschylus

4. Discuss the impact of migrations on the growth of each of the five civilizations. What were the different ways in which these civilizations influenced one another?

CHAPTER 4

Early American and African Civilizations

MANY cultures and civilizations arose in Africa and the Americas alongside those that developed in Asia and Europe. Many of these grew into big empires and developed many unique features of their own.

Our knowledge of the early civilizations of the Americas and Africa has suffered owing to ignorance and misconceptions. Until about the end of the 15th century, the very existence of the American continent was unknown to the rest of the world. The Europeans who discovered and conquered the Americas also destroyed the civilizations that had grown there over a period of centuries. Their history and achievements began to be discovered later.

Our knowledge of early African cultures and civilization has suffered much more from ignorance and, more importantly, from misconceptions. You are familiar with certain aspects of the history of some areas of North Africa as it was closely related to the history of Asia and Europe in ancient and medieval times. However, little was known, until recently, of the remaining areas of the vast continent of Africa— of the sub-Saharan Africa, or what is sometimes called Black Africa. And whatever was thought to be known was based on misconceptions. The sub-Saharan Africa began to be explored by the Europeans in the 15th century. This process of exploration was accompanied by slave trade; millions of the Africans were enslaved. They were uprooted from their homes and taken by the European slave traders to work on plantations in the Americas. By the end of the 19th century, after the slave trade had finally come to an end, most part of Africa had been conquered by various European powers. About this you will read in a subsequent Chapter. It may be noted here that the process of exploration, slave trade and conquest not only shattered the life of the peoples of the whole continent, but also produced many misconceptions about the history of the African peoples. The cultures of African people were described as primitive awaiting the coming of the European 'civilizers' to bring them the benefits of civilization, even to teach

them such simple things as settled life. It will take a long time before our knowledge of African cultures and civilizations is adequate. The story given here is sketchy covering only a few aspects and a few areas.

EARLY AMERICAN CIVILIZATIONS

Unitl only a few decades ago, it was believed that the history of the civilizations in the Americas did not go very far back into the ancient times. The well-known remains of the civilizations in Central and South America, it was believed, belonged to a period much later than the early civilizations of Asia, North Africa and Europe. The position in regard to the appearance of man in America was the same. It was believed that man arrived in this part of the world very late. Now we know that man had definitely arrived in the Americas, probably from Siberia, before 10,000 B.C. and that the well-known civilizations, some of which were flourishing in Central and South America in the 16th Century, had a long history behind them. Some scholars believe that man had migrated to the Americas more than 20,000 years ago.

We also now know that from as early as 2500 B.C. to the first centuries of the Christian era, a number of cultures were in existence which left their impact on the civilizations that eventually grew into big empires. The more famous of these civilizations are those of the Mayas and the Aztecs in Central America and of the Incas in the Andes in South America. However, there were a number of other cultures in Mexico, which deeply influenced the later cultures. In fact, the Mayas imbibed a number of traits of the earlier cultures during the formative period of their civilization.

Early Cultures

Of the early cultures, the more important are those of the Olmecs in the highlands of Vera Cruz and Tabasco, the Zapotecs and the Mixtecs in Monte Alban and Puebla, and the Totonacs in Central Vera Cruz. These cultures were characterized by certain common features such as monumental architecture, a knowledge of calendar and prevalence of complex religious rituals. Cultivation of maize as the chief crop was the basis of these cultures. The later Central American cultures were also marked by these features. The more prominent of the early cultures in South America was the Chavin culture which flourished in the northern highlands of Peru. The Chavin culture came to an end in about 300 B.C. and was succeeded by the Mochica culture on the north coast of Peru, Paracas and Nazca cultures on the south coast of Peru and Tiahuanaco culture in the Bolivian plateau.

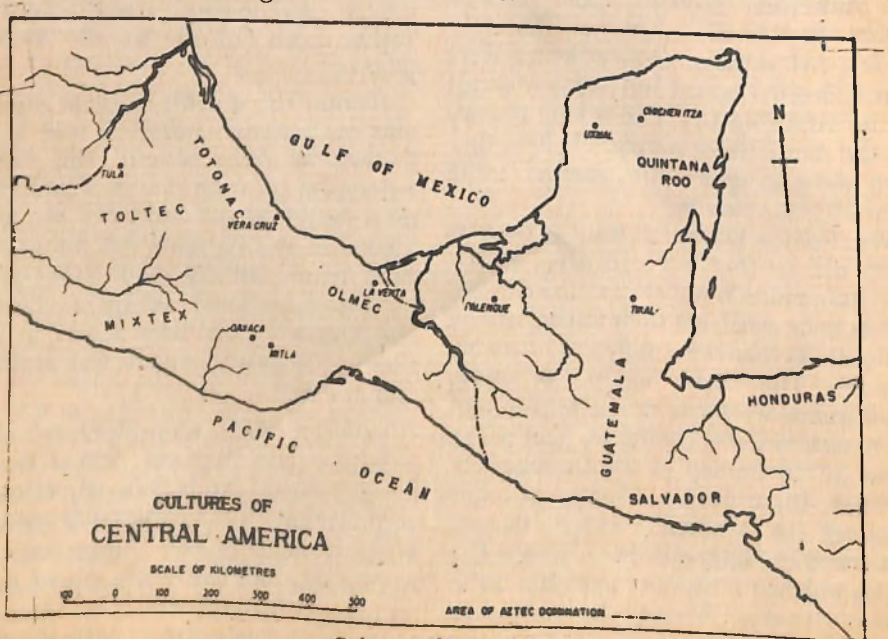
Behind the growth of these cultures and civilizations, however, was a long history of development. The earliest remains in the form of tools of prehistoric man found in the Americas are about 10,000 to 12,000 years old. The tools of early man— skilfully made stone-points used as spearheads, scrapers, choppers and knives— have been found in open sites or places where game was available, and in caves.

Between 5000 and 2500 B.C., man became a food-producer, that is, he took to agriculture. From 2500 B.C. onwards, we find many cultures in a fairly advanced stage, practising the cultivation of a number of crops like maize, gourd, potato and beans. In later cultures, maize not only was the basis of their agriculture but

was significant even in religion. An interesting fact about these cultures is that even though they were practising agriculture, they had not yet learned the domestication of animals. The only exceptions to this are the cultures of the Central Andean region. But even they had tamed only two animals—the llama, an animal resembling the camel though humpless and smaller, and the alpaca, a species of the llama having long, fine hair—which were used only as pack animals and for their wool. The use of the plough and wheel also was not known to them and their tools were made entirely of stone. In fact, stone tools continued to be used for a very long time and even the monumental architecture and the beautifully carved sculptures of the great American civilizations were made with stone tools. When the use of metals began, it was mainly for making ornaments. However, they showed great skill in crafts such as pottery-making, weaving, feather mosaic and lapidary work.

The gradual increase in the role and importance of religion can be seen in the monuments of these cultures. These monuments were connected with the propitiation of gods and offering of sacrifice. Systems of astronomy and writing also evolved in this period. This formative period of Central American cultures began in about 2500 B.C. and continued up to the beginning of the Christian era. This period also saw the gradual evolution of tribes into states in Central America.

The early cultures laid the foundations of the civilizations that arose in the Americas. You will read of three famous American civilizations in this Chapter—those of the Mayas, the Aztecs and the Incas.

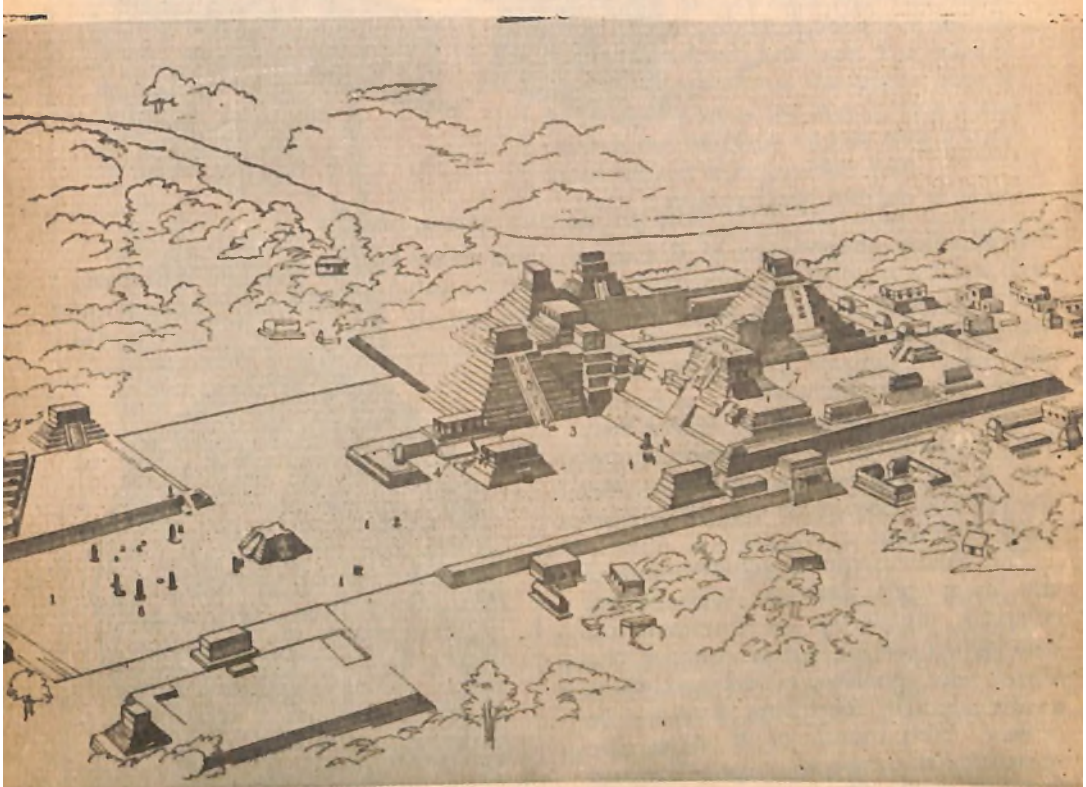


Cultures of Central America

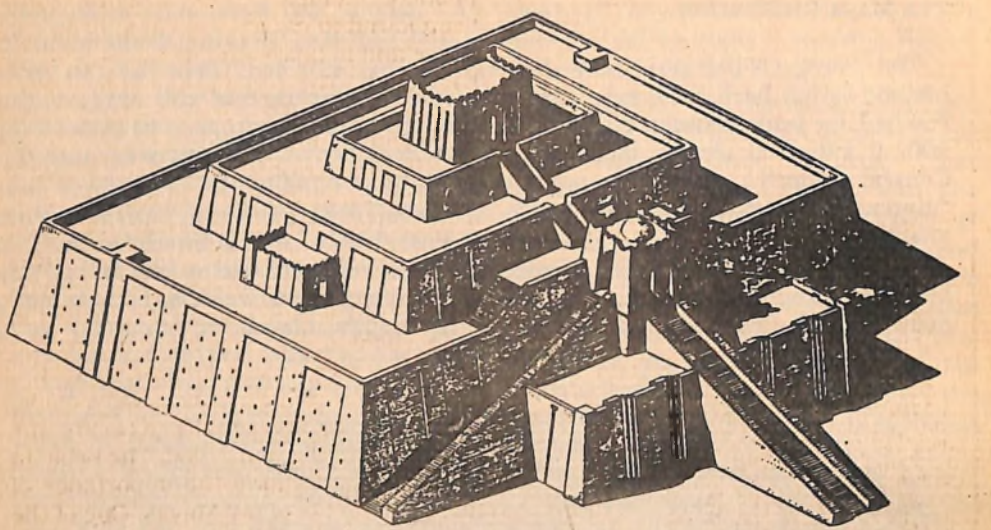
The Maya Civilization

The Maya civilization which has a history dating back to about 1500 B.C. reached its peak between A.D. 300 and 900. It extended over a large area of Central America, covering parts of Guatemala, Mexico, Honduras and Yucatan.

The remains of this mighty civilization have been found at a number of sites. Some of the famous sites are Tikal, Palenque and Bonampak in Guatemala and Copan in Honduras. Later, in the 10th century, Chichen Itza in Yucatan became the main centre of the Maya culture. These sites may properly be called temple cities or ceremonial centres because of the kinds of remains that have been found there. These structures, some of which are massive, were also profusely adorned with stone sculpture and stucco and at times with paintings as well. One of the buildings at Copan has been identified as an



4.1 A view of the magnificent pyramids, temples and other buildings at Copan



4.2 Reconstructed view of a Maya temple at Palenque

astronomical observatory. At Copan as well as at a number of other sites have been found stone stelae or slabs with hieroglyphs carved on them. These stelae give us an accurate idea of the period when they were installed.

These structures of the Mayas were built of stone, which was quarried, shaped and sculptured with stone celts. Lime mortar was used in the construction of these buildings.

The most important achievements of the Maya civilization are their perfect calendar, knowledge of mathematics, hieroglyphic writing and use of paper. The Mayan year consisted of 365 days, as in a solar calendar. There were 18 months in a year, each month of 20 days. The remaining five days were considered an unlucky period. You may recall that the Egyptian calendar consisted of 12 months of 30 days each, with the remaining five days meant for festivals. The Mayas also had a symbol for zero. The Mayan script was partly ideographic and partly

4.3 The picture (at the centre) shows a man with a ball. Around the human figure are signs which indicate measurements of time in the Mayan calender.

4.4 Mayan sculpture from Quirigua near Copan

phonetic. Examples of Mayan writing have been found in carved inscriptions on the stelae and in books, known as codices, of bark-cloth. The codices recorded events connected with the rulers and astronomical information.

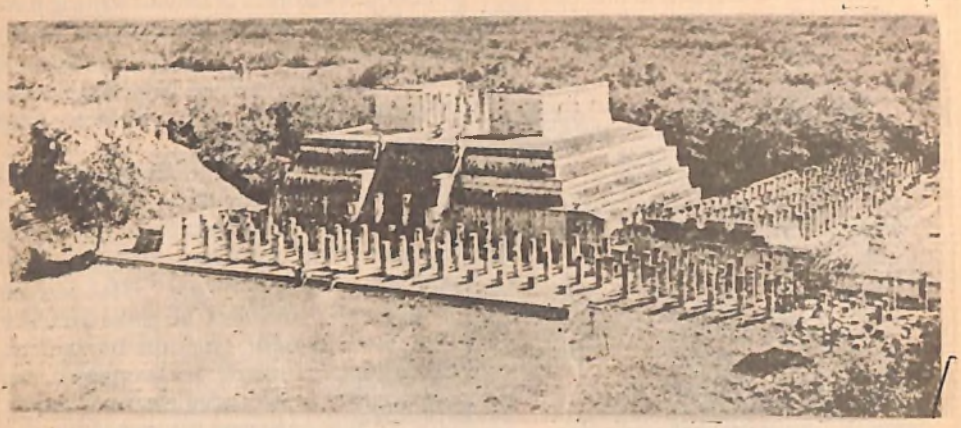
Religious rites and rituals played a very important part in the life of the Mayas. It is likely that the calendar was developed to meet the requirements of these religious performances. The Mayas worshipped a number of gods and the priest held a high position in society. Sacrifices were made to propitiate the gods. Even human sacrifices were made. Some of their gods were the god of fire, the rain-god and the maize-god. The belief in the maize-god shows the importance of maize in the life of the Mayas. One of the interesting religious rituals was a ball-game played with a rubber ball.

Even though a large number of Maya cities have been found, none of these seems to have been the centre or the capital of the civilization. It appears that the Maya civilization consisted of a number of city-states which were bound together by common language, culture and religion.

The basis of Mayan economy was agriculture. The main item of diet was maize along with beans, potato, papaya, squash and chilli. Bountiful maize crop was what the Maya was after and he propitiated the gods to get it.

The common people lived in settlements near their corn fields. They wore dresses made of cotton cloth. The Mayas knew how to dye cloth. The pottery was made by the coil method as the potter's wheel was not known.

Around A.D. 900, new groups of people poured into the valley of Mexico. The most important and powerful of these were the



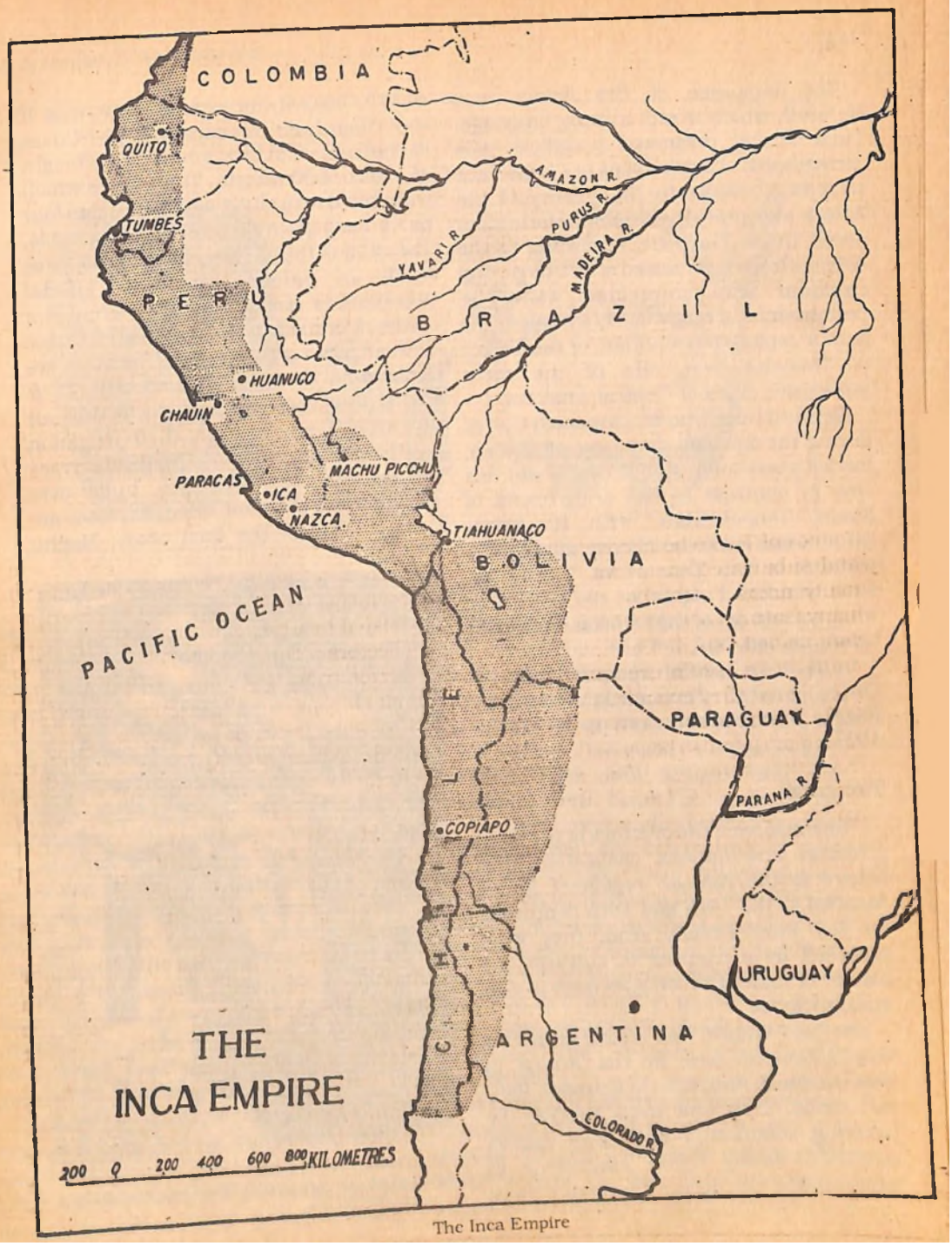
4.5 The 'Temple of the Warriors' built by Toltecs at Chichen Itza

Toltecs of Tula who overran Teotihuacan and subjugated the Maya civilization in many areas. They, however, continued many features of the civilization they had vanquished, such as the monumental architecture, sculpture and the rituals of the Mayas. They extended their empire in Mexico and the southern parts of Central America. They also began using metals. In the 12th century, however, they too receded into the background and the Aztecs emerged on the scene. The Mayas by this time had been pushed to the Yucatan peninsula and when the Spaniards arrived in the 16th century, the Mayas were in possession of only a part of Yucatan.

The Aztecs

The Aztecs, also known as the Tenochas, emerged as a tribe in about A.D. 1200. In the next two centuries they became the overlords of Mexico with their twin capitals at Tenochtitlan and Tlateloco which they founded in A.D. 1325. The Aztecs built a mighty empire which covered an area of about 200,000 square kilometres. The empire was divided into 38 provinces, each ruled by a governor, assisted by a garrison and a group of tax collectors. The Aztecs were mainly a warrior tribe. Their king, who was also their chief priest, was elected by a council of nobles, priests and warriors. They worshipped a number of gods like the sun-god and the corn-goddess who was considered the Mother of the Gods. One of the Toltec gods was adopted by them and was worshipped as the god of learning and priesthood.

The huge empire of the Aztecs was supported by the taxes collected from the tribes subjugated by them. Their *Chinampas* or floating gardens are a famous innovation. They had learned the technique of smelting and working of soft metals but they made only simple tools. Their pottery shows a wide range of variety and the crafts of featherwork and cotton-weaving a very high standard. Their craftsmen excelled in gold work and in the use of semi-precious stones such as jade and turquoise



The Inca Empire

The language of the Aztecs was Nahuatl, which is still a living language. Their writing, preserved in codices, was pictographic. Their codices are important records of events in the history of the Aztecs and provide valuable information about them. The year, according to the Aztec calendar, consisted of 260 days. The calendar was connected with the performance of religious ceremonies. The Aztecs' capital, Tenochtitlan, or the 'Palace of Tenocha' was one of the most impressive cities of Central America.

Bernard Diaz, who accompanied Cortes during the Spanish conquest of Mexico, has left a very interesting record about this city. In contrast to the drab towns of Spain, Tenochtitlan, with its green gardens and white buildings , appeared a paradise to him. Diaz wrote, "Gazing on such wonderful sights we did not know what to say or whether what appeared before us was real.... "

In 1519 the Spanish conquerors led by Cortes entered Tenochtitlan and the mighty Aztec empire came to an end in 1521.

The Incas

The Incas were the creators of the most powerful and famous civilization that throve in the Andean region of South America in the 14th and 15th centuries. As you have already read, they were preceded by a number of cultures the history of some of which goes back to very ancient times.

The Inca empire was stretched over a very extensive area in the Andes in western South America— in Ecuador, Peru and Chile. This vast area, marked by towering mountains and deep valleys stretched nearly 5,000 kilometres in length along the coast. The Inca empire was the biggest empire in the Americas. It was ruled from the capital city of Cuzco in south-central Peru situated at a height of about 3500 metres. The empire which was dotted with cities was divided into four parts, each of which was ruled by a noble. The cities of the Incas had huge structures such as palaces, temples, official storehouses and fortresses. There was a network of roads which connected Cuzco with all parts of the empire. The Incas are famous for their engineering skill. Their structures, built of stone blocks without the use of any mortar, their irrigation system and improved methods of terrace cultivation, their bridges built over canyons and their immense fortresses are unique. One of the Inca cities, Machu

4.6 Part of a building constructed of blocks of granite at Machu Picchu

4.7 Painted pottery of the Incas

Picchu in south-central Peru, situated at a height of nearly 3500 metres, was a fortress city with houses, temples and palaces connected with one another by stone staircases. The houses of peasants and ordinary citizens were made of sun-dried brick or stones plastered with mud.

The emperor of the Incas was regarded as the descendant of the sun. After the emperor came the nobles and the priests in social hierarchy. Cultivators and craftsmen were the common people. The land was owned by the state and was distributed to the cultivators according to the size of the family. The state maintained large granaries, which supported the nobility, the priests and the officials. If a crop failed, food was doled out to the people from these granaries.

Cultivation was done in terrace fields in the rugged mountains. Maize, potato and sweet potato were the main agricultural products. Arts and crafts were also highly developed, particularly pottery-making, cotton-weaving and wool from the llama and the alpaca. The Peruvian textiles of the Inca period made on loom by women had a variety of designs and they show a high level of attainment. The pottery, made without the potter's wheel, was of various types and shapes and was decorated with beautiful designs. The Incas made bronze tools and weapons and prepared beautiful ornaments of gold, silver and copper. They did not have a writing system and kept their records with a device called *quipu* which was a kind of aid to remember things. It was a stick on which knotted strings of different colours were tied in a series. A number of skulls have been dicovered, which show that medicine and surgery were highly developed.

In 1532, the Spanish conquerors under Fransisco Pizzaro entered this area and during the next two years over-ran the entire empire. The last Inca emperor was captured and executed. Gold ornaments of

4.8 Inca pottery shaped into seated human figures

the Incas were looted and melted down into bars. Not a piece of gold ornaments which had been worked by the Inca craftsmen laboriously was sent to Spain intact.

4.9 Rectangular gold plate embossed with the figure of a priest.

By the middle of the 16th century, the early civilizations of the Americas had come to an end. They were destroyed by the invaders who accompanied or followed the explorers from Europe. In the course of the following centuries, when more and more people from Europe settled there the cultures of the indigenous peoples of the Americas were destroyed. Besides the mighty civilizations mentioned in this Chapter, there were many other cultures, communities of hunters and farmers. These people were displaced from their lands and hunting places and many were exterminated. While the advanced civilizations have left behind their monuments, very little trace has been left of others. In certain areas where once communities of farmers and hunters lived, one does not find any trace of the original inhabitants. In other areas the conquerors intermixed with the indigenous population and certain aspects of the old culture survived.

In some countries, particularly in Central and South America, the indigenous people who, thanks to Columbus, came to be known as Indians, constitute a substantial proportion of their population. From the 16th century, a very different kind of civilization began to emerge as a result of the activities of European colonizers and settlers. Within a few centuries, the entire continent had changed beyond recognition.

With the growth of the popular movements in Central and South America, the original inhabitants of the Americas, suppressed for centuries, are winning their rights as equals of the descendants of European settlers. The people, the original inhabitants and descendants of European settlers, of the countries in which the civilization mentioned in this Chapter flourished, look

at their past achievements with pride. When Mexico became a republic, the symbol of the Aztec deity was adopted as the official emblem of the country. The language of the Incas, Quichua, is the second official language of Peru. Many achievements of the peoples of the Americas before the European conquest have become invaluable acquisitions of the entire mankind. Some of the agricultural and forest products which were not known to the world outside the Americas and which are now used all over the world are maize (corn), potato, tomato, squash, pumpkin, pineapple, strawberry and tobacco.

EARLY AFRICAN CULTURES AND CIVILIZATIONS

The Europeans penetrated into the African continent later than elsewhere and they called it the Dark Continent. The first Europeans to go to Africa and write about it were the Portuguese and many of them referred to the existence of powerful states and civilizations. These accounts were, however, ignored when the European conquest of Africa was completed in the 19th century. The Europeans began to believe that because of their geographical isolation, the African people never evolved from a primitive stage until the Europeans came there. Civilizing the Africans and raising them from their sub-human to the human level became one of the constant refrains of the colonial rulers. Another misconception was that in no part of tropical Africa were there established societies and developed political and economic institutions and activities. The Europeans, therefore, claimed that it was during the period of colonial rule that Africans came to learn the art of settled life and be engaged in agriculture, commerce and industries.

Recent discoveries about Africa's past have demolished these notions about the historical backwardness of the African peoples. These discoveries are the result of different sources. One important source is archaeology. In various parts of Africa, archaeologists have excavated old sites and the findings of these excavations help us to reconstruct Africa's past from the Stone Age to the present period. The task of reconstruction has been greatly helped by the historical traditions orally described by tribal and village elders. Moreover, the records left behind by the early travellers and traders help us to corroborate the oral traditions and archaeological discoveries and give many other facts and information. We have a large number of records left by the Arab travellers, traders and scholars from the 7th century onwards about many parts of Africa. From the 15th century onwards there are the accounts of many European travellers and traders beginning with the Portuguese.

The People of Africa

The people of Africa are formed of three great families belonging to the three main groups of languages spoken in Africa. First, there are people speaking *Sudanic* languages, inhabiting throughout the vast territory of the Sudan, lying between the Sahara and the equator beginning from the mouth of River Senegal down to the upper Guinea coast right up to the borders of Ethiopia in the east. Secondly, there are people speaking Bantu languages, inhabiting almost the entire southern half of the continent, south of Sudan. Thirdly there are people speaking *Semitic* and *Hamitic* languages, inhabiting the territories lying to the north and north-east of Sudan and including Ethiopia,

Somalia and a part of Kenya. These peoples intermixed with one another throughout the thousands of years of their history. You have already read about the civilizations of some of the people belonging to the third group, particularly the Egyptians. In this Chapter you will read about some cultures and civilizations of the Sudanic peoples and the Bantu peoples. The history of some Semitic-Hamitic people of some parts of north-east Africa also will be briefly mentioned.

It may be remembered here that though some areas of African hinterland were relatively isolated from the rest of the world, other areas, particularly on the coast, had a long history of contacts with many other parts of the world. Two great world religions influenced the culture of many parts of Africa from very early days. Christianity spread to north-east Africa during the early centuries of the Christian era. The spread of Islam started early in the 8th century and continued up to the 16th century. Many parts of Africa also had trade with many distant areas of the world from very early times.

From Old Stone Age to the Beginning of Iron Age

You have read in Chapter 1 about the various species of early man. One of them Zinjanthropus, who was the first tool-maker, lived in northern Tanzania about a million years ago. Many scholars believe that Africa was the home of the first *Homo sapiens* also and was thus the cradle of humanity.

The food-producing stage began about 7000 years ago in the lower Nile valley. In areas south of the Sahara, the food-producing stage began about 5000 years ago and gradually spread to various parts of southern Africa. However, because of

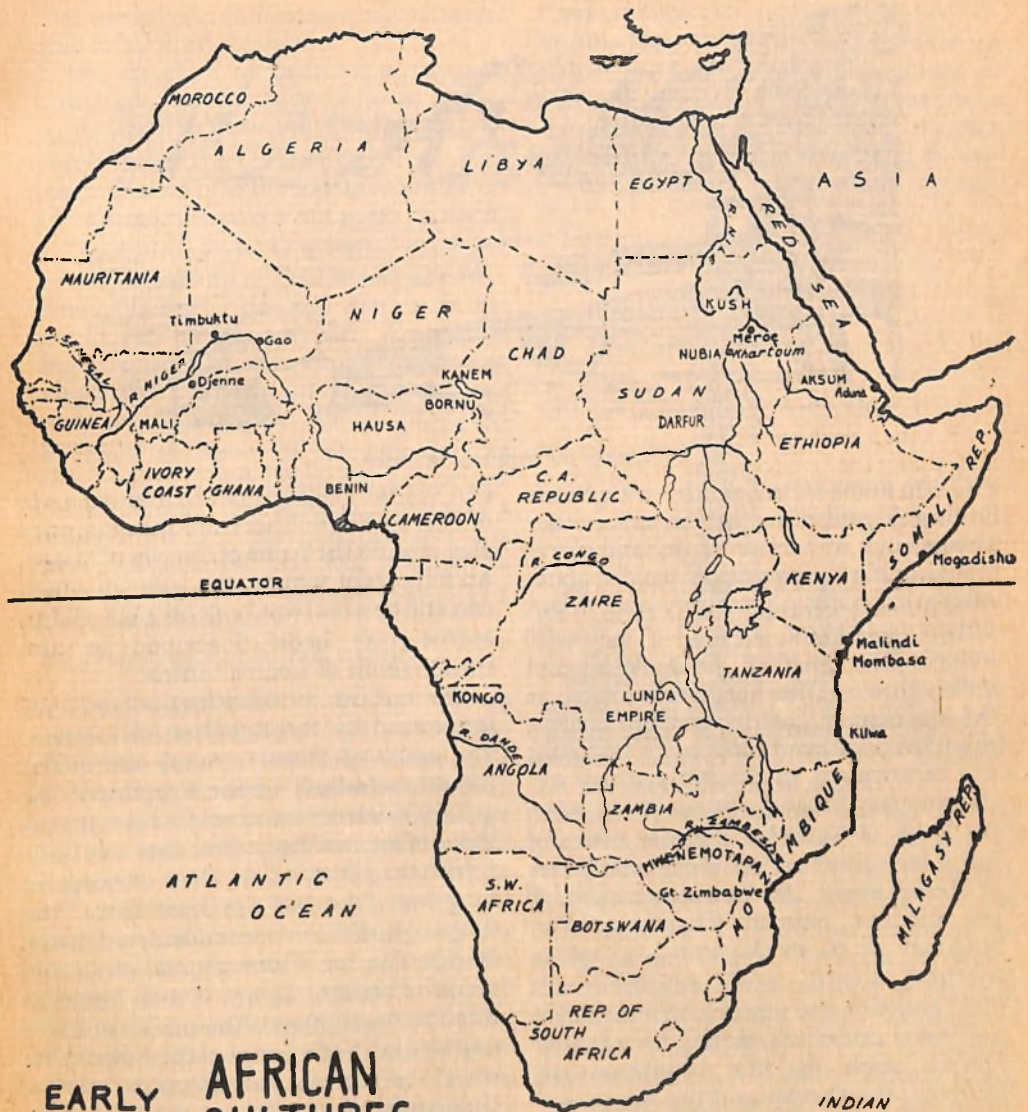
4.10 Old African furnace for smelting iron ore

certain geographical factors, it took a long time for a large part of Africa to take to agriculture. The soil in large parts of Africa is not very fertile and requires digging unlike the river valleys you read about in Chapter 2. The land also needed to be cleared of jungles. Therefore, until the use of iron began most African areas remained either at the food-gathering or at the cattle-breeding stage.

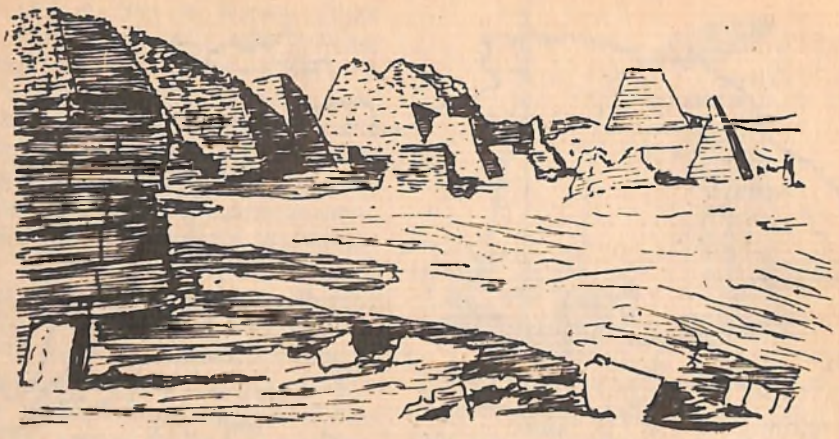
About 2000 years ago, the various processes of iron metallurgy— extraction, smelting and forging— began to be known in Africa and spread rapidly to many areas. The use of iron implements made the spread of cultivation of land possible. And the spread of agriculture led to the emergence of civilization. The knowledge of iron metallurgy perhaps came from Egypt during the first millenium B.C. The period from the beginning of the Christian era to about A.D. 1200 is very important in the history of Africa. It was during this period that iron metallurgy spread to many parts of Africa and laid the foundation of the growth of civilization there.

Kingdom of Kush

The Egyptian civilization of which you have read before had trade connections



Early African Cultures and Civilizations



4.11 Ruins of the pyramids at Meroe

with the areas to the south—with Nubia for its gold and with other areas for other things such as incense, ivory and skins. It is said that Nubia's mines yielded about 40,000 kilograms of gold every year. In this region south of Egypt, a powerful independent kingdom arose in the first millennium B.C. This kingdom is known as the kingdom of Kush, in modern Sudan. It survived for over 1000 years till about 4th century A.D. In the 8th century B.C. this kingdom became a major power when the kings of Kush became the rulers of Egypt for a short period. Their capital was at Meroe, about 160 kilometres north of the modern city of Khartoum. The kingdom of Kush expanded to areas further south and retained its independence and power long after Egypt had come under the occupation of other powers such as the Assyrians, the Iranians, the Greeks and the Romans.

Iron played a very important part in the kingdom of Kush. It led to the growth of agriculture. Iron weapons enabled the Kush kings to launch wars of conquest and led to the expansion of the kingdom into parts of the Sudan. To this day one can see the evidence of the immense use of iron in Kush. There are mountains of slag around the ruins of the city of Meroe. An important temple, the ruins of which can still be seen, was built on a hill of slag. Meroe has been described as the Birmingham of Central Africa.

The culture of Kush had been deeply influenced by the Egyptian civilization. The ruins of Meroe remind one of the monuments built by the Egyptians. The gods of Kush are more or less the same as those of ancient Egyptians. One also finds Egyptian influence in their concept of kingship. Like the Egyptian kings, the kings of Kush also were considered divine beings. The use of hieroglyphic script, the script of ancient Egypt, is also found in Kush in inscriptions. The people of Kush had also evolved a script of their own. This script is called the Meroitic script. Unfortunately, it has not yet been fully deciphered. It may interest you to know that the people of Kush seem to have had trade relation with India as Indian cloth is known to have been used there. From a sculpture showing a king seated on an elephant, some scholars have concluded

that the art and ceremonies of Kush were also influenced by India.

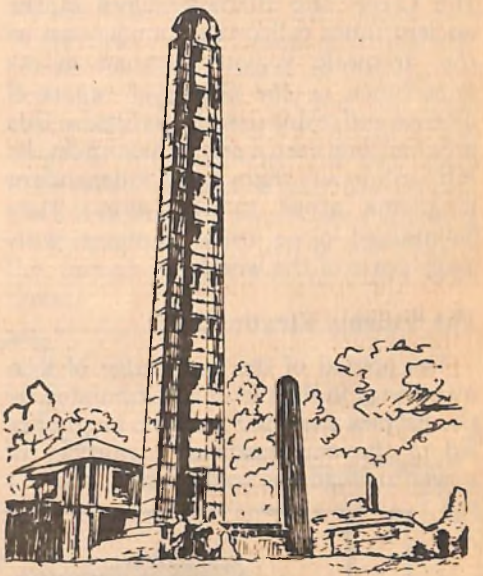
The kingdom of Kush played a very important role in the history of Africa, particularly in the central and western parts. Its greatest contribution was the dissemination of knowledge of making iron and its uses to many other parts of Africa.

The decline of the kingdom of Kush led to the emergence of two new kingdoms—Nubia in the north and Aksum in the south. In about A.D. 300, Aksum, in modern Ethiopia, vanquished the kingdom of Kush and the city of Meroe was destroyed. A historian has compared the kingdom of Kush to the city-state of Athens which had arisen at more or less the same time. Like Athens, Kush was a major centre of art and had trade relations with many lands, and like Athens, its influence spread far and wide long after it had ceased to exist.

Kingdoms of Nubia and Aksum

The kingdoms of Nubia and Aksum arose during the early centuries of the Christian era. As stated above, the state of Aksum destroyed the power of Kush in about A.D. 300 and extended its dominions further south. The rulers of both these kingdoms embraced Christianity in the 4th century A.D. While the rulers of Nubia became Muslims in the 13th century as a result of the growing influence of Arabs, Aksum remained a Christian country. It developed a distinctive culture including a written language called 'Geez'. Trade played an important part in the life of both these kingdoms. The main sea-port of Aksum was at Adulis which for several centuries was the most important centre of East African trade with countries far away, such as India and Greece. Aksum exported ivory, gold dust, raw hides and perfumes to various parts of the world.

Aksum was the more powerful of the two kingdoms. Culturally also it was more important. There was an intermixing of Sudanese, Hamitic and Arab elements in Aksum, which gave the people a distinct identity. After the rise of Islam and growth in the power of the Arabs, Aksum



4.12 An obelisk at Aksum

expanded southwards leading to the formation of the present country of Ethiopia. It is interesting to mention here the Ethiopian legends according to which the kingdom of Sheba mentioned in the Bible was Ethiopia. Perhaps you have heard that the Bible mentions a queen of Sheba who visited King Solomon of Palestine. According to the Ethiopian legends, the kings of ancient Ethiopia were the descendants of the son of the queen of Sheba and King Solomon.

The kings of Aksum built splendid monuments which remind us of the monuments of ancient Egypt. The remains of many palaces, temples, obelisks and forts have been found. The

obelisks have beautiful carved sculptures on them. The people of Aksum had mastered the art of constructing massive structures of stone without the use of mortar.

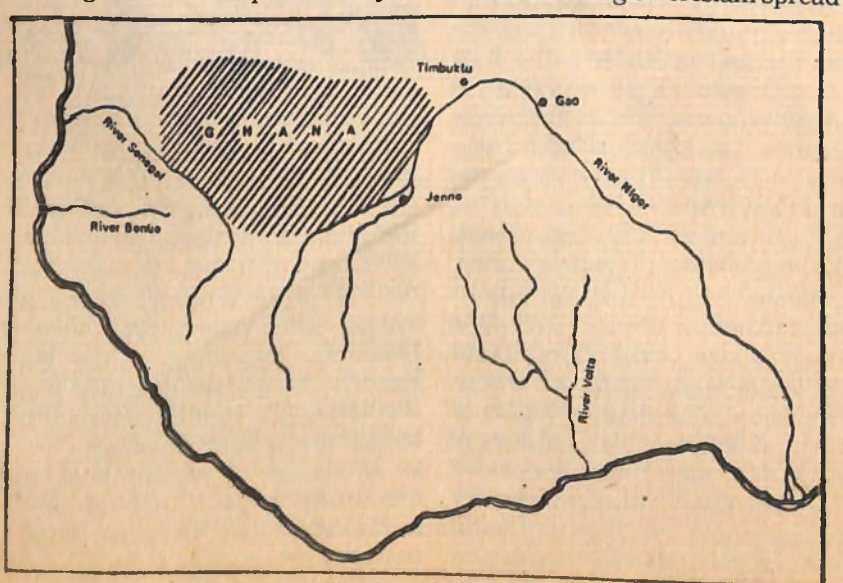
The Somali coast had been an important centre of trade from early times. The Greek and Roman sailors of the ancient times called the Somali coast as the aromatic region because of its importance as the centre of export of incense and resins used in perfumes. This area had long been a part of Aksum. In the 8th century A.D., many small independent kingdoms arose in this area. They maintained close trade contacts with many parts of the world.

The Sudanic Kingdoms

The spread of the knowledge of iron metallurgy in the territories inhabited by the peoples speaking Sudanic languages led to the emergence of a number of powerful kingdoms and empires. Many of these kingdoms were as strong as their contemporary kingdoms in other parts of the world. Various aspects of material life and culture were also highly developed. In many important features, these kingdoms were similar. Because of these similarities one can speak of a Sudanic civilization which comprised the cultures of the various kingdoms formed by the Sudanic peoples.

One of the important features of the Sudanic kingdoms was the similarity in their political institutions. Divine powers were attributed to the rulers of these kingdoms. The administration of these kingdoms was centralized and the government was run with the help of a body of efficient officials who were appointed by the king. The various offices in the state were not hereditary. They organized the collection of taxes and tributes. As trade occupied an important position, the artisans and craftsmen enjoyed a high status in society.

The new religion of Islam spread rapidly

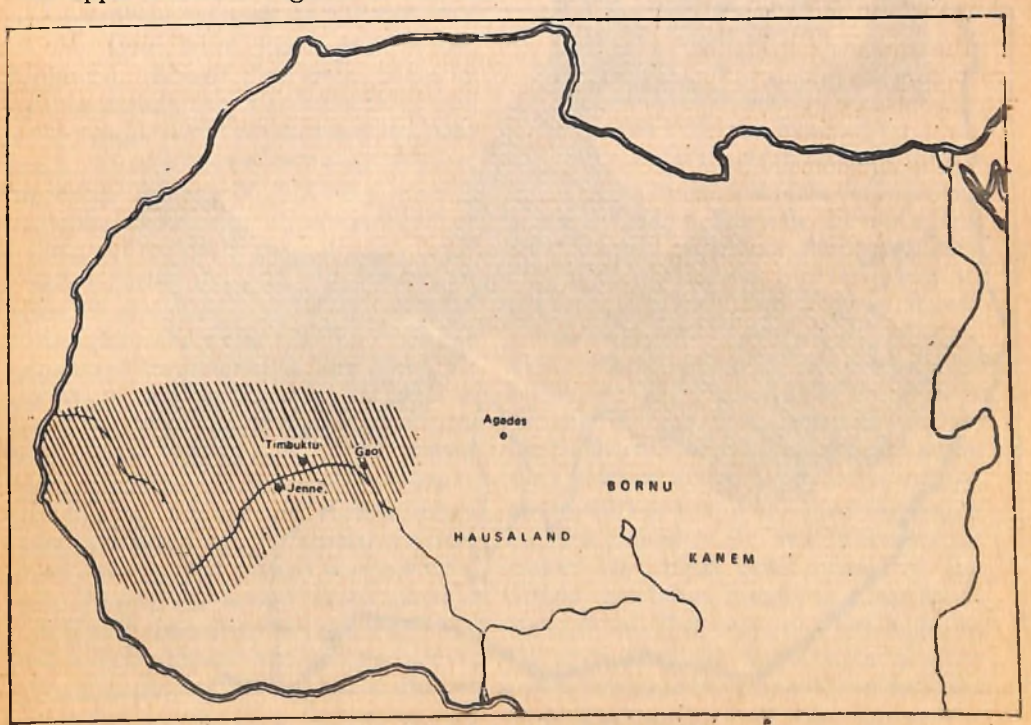


Kingdom of Ghana

in most of these kingdoms during the 10th and 11th centuries and in some others during the 15th and 16th centuries. Religion was thus another major common feature of most of these kingdoms. These kingdoms now also became a part of the Islamic civilization. It helped further in the growth of trade and led to the development of culture. Because of their close contacts with Arabs, we get many accounts of these kingdoms from Arab travellers and scholars.

Some of the major kingdoms and states that arose in Sudan were Ghana, Mali, Songhay, Kanem, Bornu, Hausa states and Darfur.

Ghana—Ghana, in the north-west of the upper course of Niger river was the first state to emerge in West Africa. The beginnings of this state can be traced back to the centuries before the Christian era. The use of iron in agriculture and in the making of weapons enabled Ghana to become a powerful state by the 8th century A.D. To the north of Ghana were areas which were rich in salt deposits and to its south were found gold deposits. Ghana was able to control the areas of gold deposits, and gold became the most important item in Ghana's trade adding to its power and prosperity. The area began to be called 'the land of gold'. The present state of Ghana has been named after this old kingdom. A large part of this state is the former British colony called Gold Coast.



Kingdom of Mali under Kankan Musa

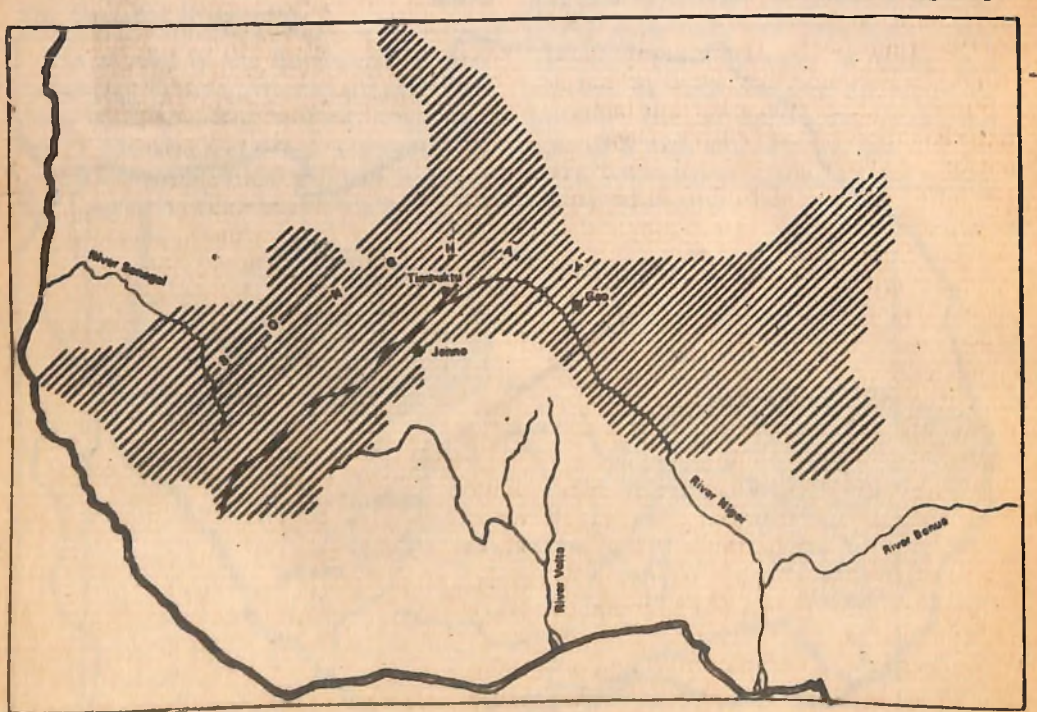
The state of Ghana declined in the 11th and 12th centuries, followed by the rise of a number of kingdoms, the most powerful of which was Mali.

Mali and Songhay—The kingdom of Mali was founded in the 13th century. It soon grew into a big empire covering a large area of western Sudan. Mali kings controlled the sources of gold in the south and the salt deposits in the north. Their power declined in the 15th century but in its place there emerged another kingdom—of Songhay. This kingdom reached its highest power in the 16th century. But by about 1600 it came to an end.

The most famous king of Mali was Mansa (which means 'emperor') Kankan—Musa. He went to Mecca on pilgrimage. The entire Islamic world was amazed at the display of his splendour and pomp. It is said that he had taken so much gold with him that when he passed through Cairo in 1324 the value of gold in Cairo fell. Following his example the famous Songhay ruler Askia Muhammad tried to impress the world by an even more magnificent display when he went on pilgrimage.

The Arab travellers have left many interesting descriptions of these kingdoms and of their wealth and power and the general conditions prevailing there.

Ibn Battuta, the famous Moroccan scholar and traveller who visited India during the reign of Mohammad Tughlaq,



Kingdom of Songhay under Askia Muhammad

toured the Mali kingdom in the middle of the 14th century. He praises the women of Mali for their 'surpassing beauty' and says that they are 'shown more respect than the men'. He refers to the prevalence of matriarchal system in Mali which he had 'seen nowhere else in the world except among the Indians of Malabar'. He was impressed by the security and order prevailing in Mali and praises the people who, according to him, "are seldom unjust, and have a greater horror of injustice than other people.... There is complete security in their country. Neither traveller nor inhabitant in it has anything to fear from robbers or men of violence".

The cities in Mali and Songhay kingdoms became prosperous from trade and commerce. Some of the famous cities of the time were Gao, Jenne and Timbuktu. Though they were primarily centres of trade, they also became famous in the Islamic world as centres of learning and attracted scholars from other parts of the world. The city of Timbuktu became particularly famous for its mosques and as a centre of learning.

Other States of Sudan—A number of powerful states had arisen in Central Sudan also. The largest of these was the kingdom of Kanem between the rivers Nile and Niger. After its decline, the state of Bornu became important in Central Sudan. The kingdom of Bornu which originated in the 8th century continued to exist till the 17th century. It maintained a large army and was particularly famous for its cavalry. The cavalry soldiers wore chain armours or breast-plates made of iron. Their horses also were well protected. Their heads were covered in front and on sides with plates made of brass. Darfur emerged as a major state during the 16th and 17th centuries and survived till the early decades of the 20th century. Benin was another important state of the people of Upper Guinea. Towards the end of the first millennium A.D., a number of city states of Hausaland had emerged in northern Nigeria. Though these Hausa states were never politically united, they were unique in the central Sudan for their, highly developed industries, particularly the manufacture and dyeing of textiles the leatherwork, glassmaking and metal work of many kinds. These states carried on an extensive trade and are important for their influence on the culture of west Africa. Like most other states in the Sudan, the Hausa people had embraced Islam in the 15th century. Their cultural influence and the importance of their trade can be seen from the the fact that their language became the language of communication all over West Africa.

4.13 An ivory mask from Benin

Civilizations of the Bantu Peoples

The African people living south of the equator speak closely related languages belonging to the family of languages known as Bantu (literal meaning 'man'). Powerful states arose in many parts of southern Africa as a result of the growth of agriculture, metal technology and trade. Except for the East African coastal cities and states, the sources of our information about the history of this region are fewer than those for the Sudanic states.

Kingdom of Kongo

In ancient times a number of states had emerged in the area along the coastal region of Angola from the estuary of river Congo to the mouth of river Dande. By the 15th century, these states were united into a large kingdom called the Kingdom of Kongo. When the Portuguese reached this area for the first time, the Kingdom of Kongo was at the height of its power. It had reached a high level of centralized and efficient administration. Though the kings of Kongo were given divine honours and were considered owners of all lands in the kingdom, monarchy was not hereditary. The king was elected from among a number of aristocratic families. His powers were not absolute. There were assemblies of the people which had many powers. The instituion of slavery was prevalent but it had many unique features. The slaves were generally prisoners of war, criminals or people who were in debt, but they could not be bought or sold. They remained with the family of the master as members of the family. They could own property. After the 15th century when Portuguese traders came to Kongo, the peace and prosperity of the kingdom was wrecked by their vandalism and treachery.

The Lunda Empire

The Lunda empire which covered a vast area including eastern Angola and Katanga (now a province of the Republic of Zaire) was one of the most powerful states in southern Africa. In this region conditions were ideal for extensive cultivation,fishing and hunting. The area was also very rich in mineral deposits. The people of this region had become technologically advanced from very early times. Many sites have been discovered which prove that as early as 8th and 9th centuries A.D., the copper of Katanga was being mined. The growth of technology and agriculture created conditions for the growth of a powerful state. The name Lunda empire is derived from the language of the region which is called 'Lunda'.

The power of the Lunda empire was based on extensive metal work in iron and copper. The Lunda cities had numerous skilled craftsmen—smiths, weavers, potters, basket-makers, brewers, wood-carvers and traders. The political system of the empire was in some ways similar to that of Kongo, but it had many unique features. As in Kongo, the Lunda empire also had a powerful popular assembly which could even dethrone the king. The matriarchal system had influenced the political institutions of the empire. There were two authorities in the state which governed the empire. These were Mwata Yamvo or the king and Lukokesha which literally means 'mother of all'. Mwata Yamvo was elected from among the sons of the dead king and Lukokesha from among the daughters of the dead king. An elaborate system of manners and ceremonies to be observed by Mwata Yamvo and Lukokesha as well as by others was fixed. Trade played an important part

in the empire. It may be seen from the fact that one of the main duties of the state was to organize and look after trade.

The Kingdom of Mwenemutepa

An Arab traveller of the 10th century referred to the existence of large-scale trade in gold and ivory between Africa's southeastern coast and India and China. This trade originated in the plateau of Zimbabwe where a great civilization had emerged by the 10th century. The Portuguese traders in the 15th century mentioned the fabulous riches of a great and powerful state in this area. The ruler of this state was Mwenemutepa or Monomotapa, as the Portuguese called him. The people of this area which was rich in agriculture, cattlebreeding and gold deposits, had established contacts with the coastal lands for trade purposes. In course of time, perhaps they came to control the coastal cities and were engaged in maritime trade in gold and ivory.

The centre of this civilization was the ancient city of the Great Zimbabwe whose great stone ruins have become famous throughout the world. The stone walls of the city reached a height of 10 metres and a thickness of about 7 metres. On this ancient site was situated the capital of the kingdom of Mwenemutepa which is believed to have flourished between the 13th and the 18th centuries covering a

4.14 Ruins of the wall at Great Zimbabwe

4.15 Ruins of a tower at Great Zimbabwe

wide territory of much of Mozambique and Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe, before it became independent, which, until recently was ruled by a white minority, was called

Southern Rhodesia.

Coastal Regions of East Africa

The eastern coastal region of Bantu Africa had come into contact with outside commerce from very early times. The trading settlements of this area were known to the Greek geographers as early as the 1st century A.D. These areas had trade links with far away countries such as India and China. The major items of trade were gold, ivory and iron. From the 7th century onwards, as a result of contacts with Arab settlers, the old cities became very important centres of trade. Some of the important cities of this period are Kilwa, Mogadishu, Malindi and Mombasa. The people of this area embraced Islam and there was a remarkable increase in the prosperity of the coastal cities. Luxury goods like porcelain were imported from China. The rulers of Kilwa minted their own currency. Trade with India was very important. In fact, India was the most important exporter of goods to these areas as well as the importer of goods from these areas. This area was very rich in mines of iron ore of high concentration. Traders to India brought iron ore, which was used for making swords.

The cultural and trade contacts with the Arabs many of whom had settled down in this area had very deep impact on the culture of this area. This can be seen in the large number of mosques and tombs which were constructed and which can still be seen all along the coast. The most important result of these contacts was the growth of a new language, *Swahili*, which is an Arabic word, meaning 'of the coast'. This language developed as a result of the intermingling of Arabic with the indigenous Bantu language. It is still the common language of a large number of people in East Africa.

Evidence of technological advancement, trade and commerce and formation of states with developed political institutions has been found in many other parts of southern Africa. In the region which today covers southern Uganda, north-west Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi and eastern parts of the Republic of Zaire, a number of kingdoms emerged in early times. The territories of many of these kingdoms extended hundreds of miles around their capital towns.

The work done by historians and archaeolgists during recent years has added to our understanding of the growth of civilization in Africa. Even though some parts of Africa were isolated from the outside world, a large part had close trade and cultural relations with many areas of the world. However, the kinds of contacts which began to develop between Africa and the outside world in the 16th century resulted in violent disruption of African societies and their social, political and economic institutions. Slaves in hundreds of thousands were sold in Americas, and in the European and Arab markets. This commerce in human cargo continued for four centuries. By the time the European powers partitioned Africa, Africa's glorious traditions had indeed become a part of the forgotten past.

EXERCISES

Things to know

1. Describe the important common features of the early American civilization.
2. What were the most important achievements of the Mayas ?
3. Compare the Mayan and the ancient Egyptian calendars.
4. Describe the achievements of the Inca and Aztec civilizations.
5. Why did the food-producing stage in some parts of Africa start later than in some other parts of the world ?
6. In what ways was the civilization of Kush influenced by the ancient Egyptian civilization ? Why is Kush called the Birmingham of Central Africa ?
7. What were the main centres of the Sudanic civilization ?
8. What are the three main families of languages in Africa ? Mention the language group to which the people of the following civilizations belonged :
   Aksum, Mali, Kongo, Hausa States, Ghana, Mwenemutepa, Bornu.
   What is meant by Swahili ?
9. When did Islam spread to Africa ? What was its influence on the African civilizations ?
10. Describe the importance of iron in the growth of civilizations in Africa.

Things to do

1. On a map of modern Central and South America, indicate the country/countries where the civilizations of the Incas, the Mayas and the Aztecs flourished.
2. Given below are the names of old African kingdoms and cities. Write against each the name(s) of the present country/countries in which they were located.

Kush	Great Zimbabwe
Aksum	Darfur
Ghana	Timbuktu
Mali	Hausa States
Songhay	Kingdom of Kongo
Lunda Empire	Mwenemutepa

Things to think about and discuss

1. In what major respects do the material cultures of the American civilizations differ from the early Asian and European civilizations ?
2. Discuss the importance of iron and foreign trade in the growth of African civilizations.

CHAPTER 5

The Medieval World

SO far in this book we have been concerned with some civilizations that arose in Asia, Europe, and the Americas and Africa in ancient times. While the story of the growth of civilization in parts of Asia and Europe has been brought up to the early centuries of the Christian era, to the end of the ancient period, the civilizations of the Americas and Africa have been described up to a much later period, roughly up to the time of the coming of the Europeans to these continents. In this Chapter, you will study the development of civilization mainly in Asia and Europe after the ancient times from about A.D. 600 to about A.D. 1500. This is the period between ancient and modern times, usually called the medieval period, or the Middle Ages. However, the term does not include exactly the same years in the history of all parts of the world discussed in this Chapter.

By A.D. 500, the Roman empire in the west was destroyed as a result of invasions by barbarians. The Eastern Roman empire, which was founded before A.D. 500, continued for a thousand years more. Western Europe was divided into a number of small kingdoms, but some conquerors tried to combine these small kingdoms into bigger ones.

About this time the Guptas ruled in India. Then that empire, too, fell from its position of glory under weak kings and the pressure of the Hun invaders. In the early years of the seventh century, Prophet Mohammad founded Islam. The Arab civilization became the most advanced in the medieval world.

During the medieval period many changes took place all over the world. The political map was altered with the decline of old kingdoms and empires and the rise of new ones. However, more important than the political changes were the changes in social and economic life. These changes were very marked in western Europe. The social and economic system that developed there in this period was very different from what had prevailed in the ancient period. You read earlier that a very important feature of the society in ancient Greece and Rome was the existence of slavery. Much of the productive work in these societies was done by slaves. The system that developed

first in western Europe in this period and later in other parts of Europe is called feudalism. The economic life under this system was predominantly rural and the main division in society was between peasants, who worked on the land and the feudal lords who either got a share of the peasants' produce or had peasants to work on their lands without any payment. Most of the produce was consumed locally. Towns and trade played very little role in the life of the people. You will read about this system in detail. In other parts of the world the changes that took place in the social and economic life of the people were not so marked. For example, in some parts of the world, the trade and towns did not decline as they did in Europe. Similarly, the institutions that developed in Europe under feudalism did not generally exist elsewhere. However, in spite of differences in the specific institutions, there were many similarities. The exploitation of the peasantry was the main feature of the social and economic systems everywhere. In some societies, such as in western Europe, it took the form of serfdom. In others, such as in India, the Zamindars and the nobility took a large portion of the peasant's produce though the status of the Indian peasant was not that of a serf. Some scholars consider the social and economic system in Asian countries including India, also to be a kind of feudalism though in many respects it was different from the European feudalism. The characteristic feature of the medieval social systems, according to them, was

Byzantine Empire during Justinian's reign

feudalism.

MEDIEVAL EUROPE

The Roman emperor Constantine had established a new capital of the eastern territories of the Roman empire in the ancient Greek city of Byzantine in A.D. 330. This city became famous as Constantinople, named after Constantine. The Roman empire in the west was destroyed as a result of the barbarian invasions but in the east it continued for about a thousand years as the Eastern Roman, or the Byzantine, empire with Constantinople as its capital. It was a vast empire and Constantinople was the largest city in Europe while London and Paris were villages. The Byzantine empire had close trade relations with countries farther east. The kind of Christianity the Byzantine emperors followed came to be known as the Eastern, or Greek, Orthodox. Many Christians in eastern countries are followers of this Church. The Byzantines built beautiful churches with lavish decorations. The most famous of these is the Church of St. Sophia in Constantinople. The Turks conquered the Byzantine territories in 1453.

The downfall of the Roman empire resulted in great confusion in western Europe giving rise to a large number of

5.1 St. Sophia, Constantinople. The Church was built during the reign of Byzantine emperor Justinian in the 6th century A.D. The minarets were added later by the Turks.

Political Divisions of Europe in the 14th century

small states. About A.D. 800, Charlemagne founded an empire which included modern France and Germany and a part of Italy. This empire later broke up after his death. By A.D. 1000 a new empire—the Holy Roman Empire—came into existance and extended over Germany and Austria. Gradually other kingdoms, big and small, grew up in other parts of western Europe.

FEUDAL SYSTEM IN EUROPE

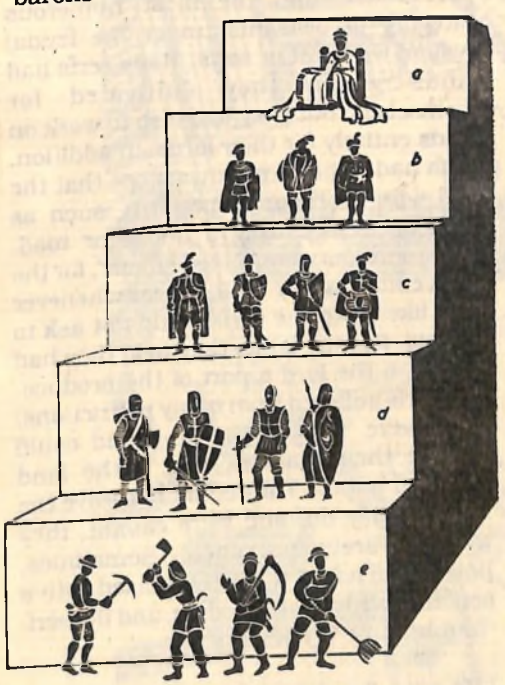
The new social and economic system that arose in Europe in the medieval times is known as the feudal system. It was essentially a rural system in which the peasants had to give a part of their produce to the lords in the form of rent or taxes or had to labour for the lords without any payment. The specific institutions of the feudal system described below pertain to the medieval societies of western Europe. In western Europe, the absence of a central authority led to the emergence of political institutions which are considered a major feature of European feudalism. The political institutions in other parts of

the world followed a different pattern.

The word 'feudal' comes from *feud* which originally meant a fief or land held on condition or service. In a feudal society, land was the source of power.

Feudal Classes and Loyalties

The feudal society in western Europe soon developed a hierarchy, or graded organization, in which every person was allotted a position. At the top stood the king. He bestowed fiefs or estates on a number of lords who were known as *dukes* and *earls*. Their lords in their turn distributed a part of their fiefs among a number of lesser lords who were called barons and, in return, secured their military support. Thus the dukes and earls were the king's vassals, that is to say, they owed allegiance directly to the king. The barons were the vassals of the dukes and earls. The knights formed the lowest category of feudal lords. Usually they were the vassals of barons for whom they performed military service. Knights did not have any vassals of their own. Every feudal lord was expected to pay homage to his overlord and could then be invested with some formal rights.



5.2 Feudal hierarchy :
a. king; b. dukes and earls; c. barons; d. knights; e. peasants

Every feudal lord, except the knight, was first a vassal and then an overlord with a number of vassals under him. The relationship from top to bottom was one of allegiance. No vassal owned any land; he only held the land as of his overlord. The vassal was in every way his lord's man. He recognized no other authority than that of his overlord.

In time of need, for example, when the king fought a war, he could demand military assistance from his vassals. These vassals—the dukes and the earls—demanded the same assistance from their vassals, the barons, and the barons from their vassals, the knights. Every feudal lord contributed a detachment of warriors, and thus a fighting army would be formed. The feudal hierarchy was so strong that even the king would not call a baron or a knight directly and demand assistance from him. Hierarchical stages had to be carefully respected.

Feudal Lords

Each feudal lord was all-powerful within his fief. He had his own soldiers; he levied taxes on those who lived in his fief; he acted as a judge and tried and punished those against whom complaints were made. The result was that there was very little political unity in feudal countries

and a strong central power was not allowed to develop. Sometimes the greater lords grew so powerful that they even ignored the king and refused to obey him.

Soon, this system became hereditary. The eldest son of a lord succeeded him and demanded an oath of allegiance from his father's vassals. The other sons of a lord were lords and the vassals' sons were vassals. Thus grew up a rigid society, somewhat similar to our caste system. It was difficult for a person to grow out of his class; he was bound to the class in the hierarchy in which he happened to be born.

Peasants

So far we have discussed the feudal lords of different categories who held the land as vassals of their overlords. These lords did not cultivate their lands themselves; they had peasants to do it for them. These peasants formed the lowest class in fuedal society and also the largest section of the population. They were also divided into a number of categories.

5.3 The illustration shows a peasant bringing grain, fruits and vegetables, and wine to the lord.

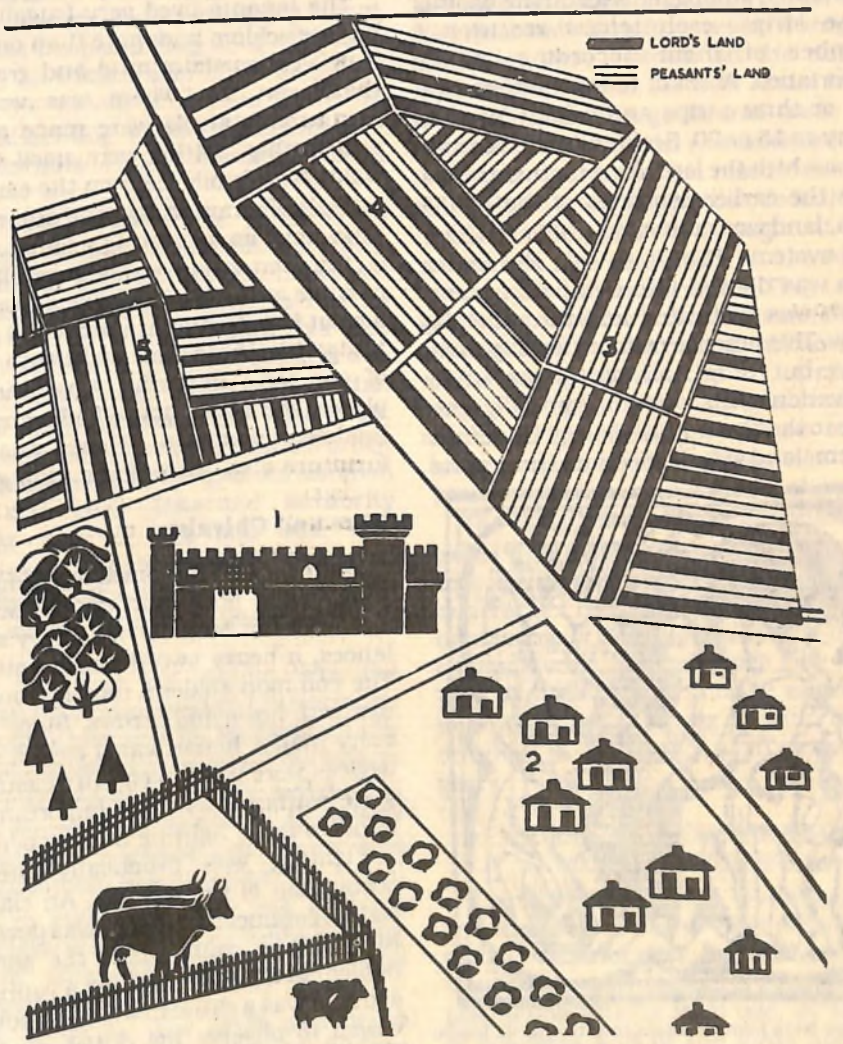
Freeholders formed the first category. They received their lands from the lords which they used and managed as their own. They did not work for their lords, but paid a tax to them. The second category of peasants was that of *villeins*, who gave a part of the produce of the lands to their lords. Villeins had also to work on the lord's fields for a fixed number of days, but on other days they were free to look after their fields which they had received from their overlords.

The last, and the most numerous category of peasants under the feudal system was that of *serfs*. Many serfs had lands which they cultivated for themselves, but they had also to work on lands entirely for their lords. In addition, serfs had to perform any service that the lord wanted them to perform, such as building or repairing a house or road. These services were 'forced labour', for the lords could call for their service whenever they liked and the serfs could not ask to be paid. For the lands they held they had to pay to the lord a part of the produce. The serfs suffered from many restrictions. They were 'tied' to the land and could change their masters only if the land changed hands. They could not leave the land; if they did and were caught, they were severely punished. Sometimes, however, if a lord was very pleased with a serf, he gave him his freedom, and the serf, then became a *freeman*.

Life on a Feudal Manor

Feudal life as you have seen was based on agriculture. The village farm was the

manor, the size of which varied from place to place. Its centre was the manor house of the lord where he lived or which he visited, for the lords often possessed several manors. The manor included a large farm which supported all those who worked on it, a pasture area where the manor cattle grazed, and comon woods which supplied fuel and timber. A manor always had a number of cottages where



5.4 Plan of a Manor. 1. Manor house; 2. Peasants' huts 3. Winter field; 4. Fallow land; 5. Spring field. The illustration also shows the division of land into strips.

the common people lived, some workshops to provide for manor needs, and a chapel.

The farm land was divided into a large number of strips, each only a few furrows in width and as long as the field. Land was distributed among tenants on the basis of these strips, each tenant receiving a number of them according to his importance. A small tenant perhaps got two or three strips and a big tenant as many as 15 or 20. Serfs cultivated certain strips which the lords kept for themselves.

In the earlier centuries of the Middle Ages, land was cultivated under the 'two-field system'. That is to say, the manor farm was divided into two parts, one of which was cultivated and the other lay fallow. This practice restored fertility to the lands but only half of it was under cultivation. This system gradually gave place to the 'three-field system'. Under this system, land was divided into three parts, one of which was planted with an early crop and the second with a late crop, and the third lay fallow. This meant that two-thirds of the land could be used for cultivation at a time.

5.5 There were many peasant revolts against feudal oppression in medieval Europe. The illustration shows peasant men, women and children being taken prisoner after a peasant revolt in Spain.

The tenants lived very frugally. Their houses seldom had more than one room; they were made of mud and grass with thatch on top. There was very little furniture; utensils were made of wood, and leather bottles were used to store water. The family slept on the earth floor on beds of straw or hay, and animal skins were used as a covering against cold.

The manor house was generally made of stone and often built like a castle with a moat full of water around it and a drawbridge, like those that can be seen in some of our forts in Delhi, Agra and other places. The manor house had many rooms but few windows. There was some furniture also, including a dining-table.

Wars and Chivalry

Battles in feudal times were fought on horse-back, both man and horse, fitted with armour. Men carried heavy shields, lances, a heavy sword and a battle-axe. The common soldiers usually fought on foot with bows and arrows. Since almost every manor house was a castle, several devices were used to capture castles and siege warfare was more important than hand-to-hand fighting in the open.

Fighting was practically the only occupation of the nobility. An elaborate code of conduct for knights was developed. Kings alone could make the son of a nobleman a knight. Making a young man a knight was a ritual in which he solemnly vowed to observe his duties as a loyal vassal and to protect the weak. He could then prefix 'Sir' to his name, as many Englishmen do even today when the

reigning monarch knights them. Like the lords, the knights hated to work with their hands and preferred to spend their time fighting.

The knights often fought duels and organized tournaments where they fought with blunt weapons. They showed special courtesy to women and often fought to uphold the honour of women. There are many interesting stories of knights that resemble those of Rajput heroes in Indian history.

Feudalism served its purpose of bringing a measure of orderliness, safety and security to medieval life. It allowed social and economic activity to run its normal course. But feudalism had also another side to it. It developed, and was dependent on, a rigid class system. Man was divided from man, class from class, and this stood in the way of political unity. The nobles looked down upon the common man, and their inherited authority brought with it one-man rule and oppression. The lords were often too powerful for the kings to control and fought among themselves for small selfish ends.

The king had no contact with the common man, who was left entirely to the mercy of his lord, and the lord was usually irresponsible and unmindful of the welfare of common people. The feudal system also led to economic stagnation. The wealth produced by the peasants and the artisans was wastefully consumed by the feudal lords, in luxurious living and in wars. Individual enterprise and initiative were all but unknown. Innovations were encouraged.

The desire for new lands and riches encouraged the lords and leaders of the Church to fight the 'holy wars', or the Crusades. In the 7th Century, the Arabs had conquered Palestine. The holy places of Christianity were in this area and the stated cause of the wars was to regain the Holy Land. The lords who joined these wars often fought among themselves. Although the wars ended in a fiasco, they had some indirect influences on European life. They were a drain on the nobles resources. The contact with Arabs led to demand for luxury goods and trade and commerce with the east was extended. The wars were a drain on the resources of the Church and the Popes took recourse to questionable practices to augment their resources. The contacts with the Arabs, however, had a positive result. They taught the Europeans the arts and sciences of the Arab civilization. They acquired knowledge of the compass and the art of making paper. A large number of English words of Arabic origin date from these wars—*lemon, sugar, syrup, sofa, muslin, satin, bazaar, algebra, zero, cypher, chemistry*.

The early Middle Ages have often been called the Dark Ages, and to some extent they were truly dark. The people led a miserable life. Education was very uncommon. The helplessness of the common man, the arbitrary rule of the king and the barons and the absence of national unity—all these conditions were common in Europe for over a thousand years.

TRADE AND COMMERCE IN MEDIEVAL EUROPE

The emergence of feudalism was accompanied by the decline of trade and towns. The economic basis of feudalism was small-scale holdings of peasants. The production was for local use, by families of peasants and of the lords and their retainers. The needs of the people for non-agricultural goods such as cloth and

agricultural implements were met either within the village or at the medieval fairs, which were held at regular intervals. At the fairs agricultural products were exhanged for non-agricultural goods which were produced by artisans with simple tools and implements. There was no great need for towns in this economy.

However, gradually, particularly from the eleventh century, trade and towns began to become important. There was an increase in the demand by the lords for luxury goods. The contacts with the East which the 'holy wars' had facilitated created demand for luxury goods of the East. With the extension of cultivation and improvements in agricultural methods, many peasants also were in a position to exchange a part of their agricultural products for non-agricultural goods. These developments encouraged the growth of crafts and trade and led to the emergence of towns.

Medieval Cities of Europe

New towns began to emerge as centres of crafts and trade. In the beginning, some peasants engaged in crafts along with parctising agriculture. Gradually they became full-time artisans and settled in places where it was easy to exchange their products for agricultural goods. Merchants who traded in goods settled in such places. The first towns were very small, no bigger than villages but as the number of artisans increased and the trade became extensive, the towns became bigger. When western Europe traded with the East, the cities in Italy enjoyed an advantage over others because of their location. Genoa, Florence and Venice thus became great trading centres. To these cities came cotton, silk, precious stones, spices from the East, for distribution all over Europe. The wealth of these cities soon made them centres of culture.

Nearly all European cities in medieval times depended on commerce and were, therefore, located either on the seacoast or on trade routes. In Italy, for example, Venice and Genoa were sea ports, while Florence, Milan and Pisa stood on trade routes. Rome's case was exceptional. It was an ancient city and also the seat of the office of the Pope. In what are now Holland and Belgium, in Germany, in France and in England, a number of cities grew up that were either sea-ports or centres of trade and commerce. These cities are among Europe's leading cities today.

Nearly all towns had walls around them to guard them against armed brigands and enemy feudal lords. The same was true of medieval Indian towns. The walls gave the towns protection but streets were narrow, crooked, mostly unpaved and dirty. Sanitation was poor and people often fell prey to epidemic diseases. The Black Death in England—perhaps a disease similar to bubonic plague—wiped out about one-third of the English population in the middle of the 14th century.

Increased trade, commerce and specialization of crafts made it neccessary for merchants and craftsmen to organize themselves into guilds. There were guilds of goldsmiths, blacksmiths, barbers, leather-workers, carpenters and many others. They prescribed standards for their crafts, regulated prices and hours of work and admitted new members only after they had served as apprentices for some length of time.

Guilds, specially the craft guilds, did serve a useful purpose in medieval times. Guild members were jealous of their professional skills and looked after the

Medieval European Cities and Trade Routes

social and economic needs of fellow members. However, guilds turned into closed groups, keeping out newcomers and in every way looking out for their own gain.

The revival of trade and the emergence of towns had some important consequence. They led to the importance of the merchant in society and soon he started wielding influence not only in social and economic life but also in political matters. A very important characteristic of medieval towns was their freedom from all sorts of feudal controls. The people of these towns could move about, marry their children, and acquire and dispose of their property as they liked. Many cities had obtained their freedom from the kings and elected their own officials to administer their affairs.

These developments undermined the feudal system.

CHURCH IN MEDIEVAL EUROPE

The Roman Catholic Church was as powerful an institution as feudalism in western Europe during medieval times. At the head of the Church was the Pope, who was accepted as the vicar of Christ. When Christianity was gradually accepted by the Roman emperors and, later, by barbarian chiefs, the Pope became the head of the Christian world in western Europe. By the 6th century A.D., Popes were the heads of the Church as kings were heads of their principalities. Popes were often stronger than the kings and could force them to obey their orders.

Christian Monks and Monasteries

Christianity taught that man's life on earth was not the end of existence, and that he should give up pleasures in this life in order to have a life of the spirit after death. Many Christian monks—St. Francis, St. Benedict, St. Augustine—laid great stress on purity, resistance to temptation and the pursuit of 'goodness'. Some people withdrew from worldly life and led a life of virtue and penance. Some men became monks and took the vows of obedience, poverty and chastity. Some women became nuns and lived in nunneries. The institutions where the monks lived together were called monasteries. This may remind you of the Buddhist *bhikshus* and their *viharas*.

Life in monastery was well organized. Monks and nuns had to observe rigid rules of discipline. They could not marry or own property. They either worked or prayed. The slightest disobedience brought hard punishment.

Some monasteries, like those founded by St. Benedict, were centres of learning and assured the members a well-ordered life. Through their strict rules of discipline, they trained groups who by their example and preaching, sought to uplift the moral life of the people, educate the laity and tend the sick.

Gradually, however, corruption crept into the monasteries. They acquired land and amassed wealth, helping to make the Church one of the biggest land-owners in medieval times. With cultivation and other work done by serfs, the life of many monks and nuns was no longer frugal and austere. Luxury, good food and drink, and idleness became common. Some great leaders sought to reform this state of affairs by introducing a new religious order—that of wandering monks. Members of this order had no homes but moved among the people, living on charity and setting an example of a life of chastity and self-sacrifice.

During the early Middle Ages, Churches were the only centres of education and learning. The kinds of schools to which parents sent their children, when the Greek and Roman civilizations were still flourishing had disappeared. The education that Churches could provide was like a drop in the ocean.

For a long time, monks and priests were the only literate men in Europe. Learning was kept alive by the Church and the monks in the monasteries. However, the learning fostered by the Church was a narrow type. The subjects that it taught were grammar, logic, arithmetic and theology. The only calling for which this education was suitable was that of a monk or a priest. The language of learning was Latin, which only churchmen could read. Everything was dominated by faith and

5.6 The illustration shows a teacher lecturing to his students at Bologna in Italy. Bologna became one of the first universities in Europe.

5.7 Before the invention of printing each book had to be written in hand.

anybody who appealed to reason against dogma was punished. Science had come to a standstill. Magic and superstition held the day. Belief in witches was common and the punishment for witches was to burn them alive.

Later on many universities were started, at Selerno and Bologna in Italy, Paris in France, and Oxford and Cambridge in England. However, these universities were dominated by monks and confined their education to theology and philosophy. History and science were still almost completely ignored. There were only hand-copied books and few libraries from which students could borrow the few books that existed; there were no laboratories for conducting scientific experiments.

The best specimens of European architecture in the Middle Ages are the churches. The earlier churches built in the Romanesque style were in imitation of the Roman basilica, like the Byzantine and had spacious central halls and round arches with rows of columns. The ceiling was barrel-vaulted and massive walls supported the heavy ceiling. The interior was, therefore, rather dark. The style was simple, but impressive.

5.8 Notre Dame, Paris. The cathedral of Notre Dame was one of the earlies French Cathedrals to be built in the Gothic style. It was built between A.D. 1163 and A.D. 1270

About the 12th century, a new style—the Gothic—was developed in France. The lancet arches were pointed and the walls now had windows. They brought more light to the inside and their panes of stained glass added much to the beauty of the buildings.

THE ARAB CIVILIZATION

The people of Arabia were divided into a number of tribes which lived mainly on the breeding of livestock. The various tribes were involved in wars over the possession of land, particularly pastures. During the first six hundred years of the Christian era, trade with other lands had become important and many Arabs had taken to it. Consequently trade had brought Arabs into contact with new ideas. In the 7th century, a new religion, Islam, arose in Arabia, which within a very short period not only united the warring tribes but also led to the establishment of a big empire and the building of a civilization which in many respects was the finest civilization of the time.

Rise of Islam

Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam, was born in Mecca in Arabia in A.D. 571. His father had died before his birth and he was brought up by his uncle. When he grew up he became a trader and travelled all over Arabia. He also worked for a widow whom he later married. He would often retire to

a cave near Mecca for meditation. When he was 40, he had 'visions of truth' and became a prophet.

At this time, Arabia was a land of superstition and ignorance. Mecca, the city of Muhammad's birth, was a commercial and religious centre. The black rectangular stone, set in a holy building called the Kaaba, was revered by the Arabs. It can still be seen in Mecca, the city to which the Muslims go on a pilgrimage.

Muhammad's visions completely convinced him that Allah was the only God and that he was a Prophet of God. He recited what he had heard during visitations he had from God's angel. He forbade the worship of idols and made many enemies, chiefly among the rich merchants. Ultimately, he had to leave Mecca and take refuge in Medina, where he was given a warm welcome. This event took place in A.D. 622 and is known as the year of the *Hijira*, or migration, which became the first year of the Muslim calendar.

Islam teaches faith in the one all-powerful God, Allah, and in the Prophethood of Muhammad. Man is powerless before Allah and must, therefore, submit to His will. Muslims recognize earlier prophets as well as Muhammad, but believe that Muhammad was the last and the greatest. The prophets of the Jews are revered by Muslims, but they deny that Jesus was the son of God. Like the Christian religion, Islam speaks of a life after death and of a last judgement when all men shall receive the reward for their earthly actions. Muslims all the world over regard themselves as brothers and equals.

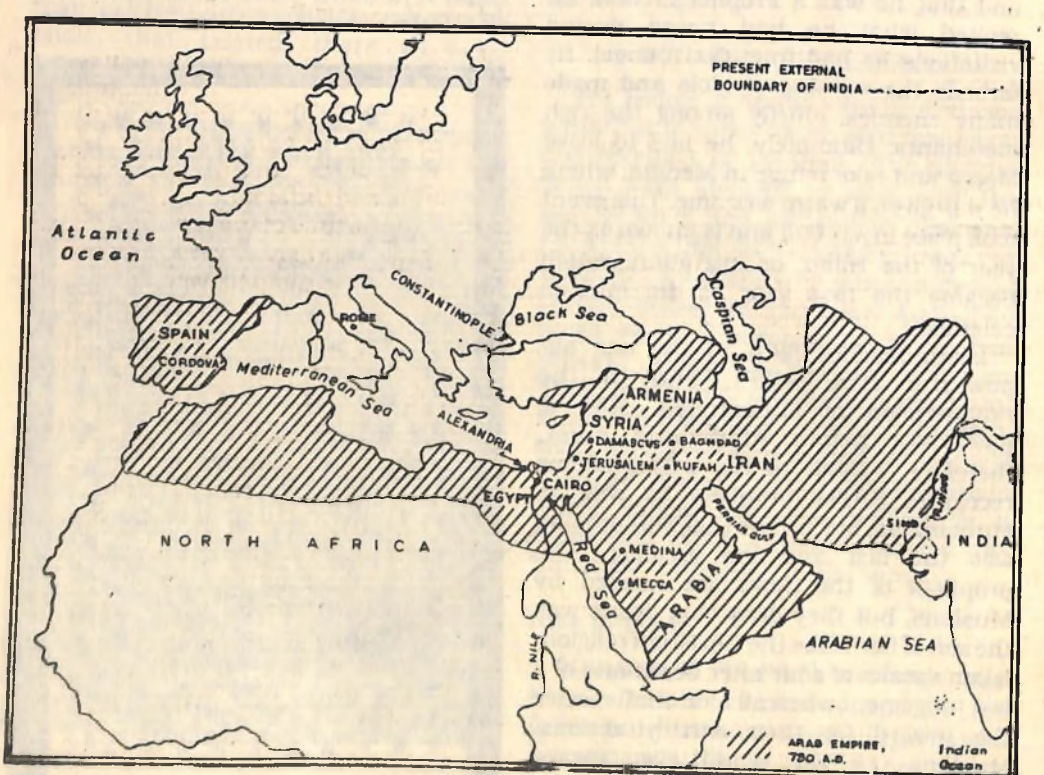
A Muslim has to regulate his life according to five principles: (1) he must proclaim the unity of God and the prophethood of Muhammad: *La-Ilaha illa Allah: Mohammad-ur-Rasul ullah* (There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His Prophet); (2) he must offer prayers five times every day and on Friday afternoons in the mosque; (3) he must give alms to the poor as an offering to Allah and a religious act; (4) he must keep fast from dawn to dusk throughout *Ramazan*, the holy month of Islam, and (5) he should, if possible, go on a pilgrimage to Mecca, at least once in his lifetime.

Over and above these five principles, Islam lays down some observances and also forbids some practices. No Muslim

5.9 A page from a 16th century copy of the *Quran*

should worship an idol. A Muslim must not eat pork, for the pig is unclean. He must not lend money on interest. He has to follow certain rules laid down regarding marriage and divorce. The emphasis on a life of virtue and benevolence makes Islam one of the great humanitarian religions. The holy book of the Muslims, the *Quran*, emphasizes such virtues as 'to free the captive, or to feed, in a day of famine, the orphan who is of kin, or the poor man who lieth on the ground'.

Muhammad did not claim divine origin for himself. He was not only a religious leader but also a political leader. After his death, his successors were known as *Caliphs*, or 'Khalifas' who held both religious and political authority. Muhammad knew his people well and the simplicity of his teachings easily brought the Arabs under common political rule and made them into one people. They were filled with great zeal, and Islam spread far and wide within an incredibly short time. There is no priest standing between a believer and God and no rituals govern a Muslim's worship. Prayers can be offered anywhere with the face turned towards



The territorial waters of India extend into the sea to a distance of twelve nautical miles measured from the appropriate base line.

The Arab Empire in about A.D. 750

Mecca.

The *Quran*, the holy book of Islam, it is believed, reports the word of God received by Muhammad through the angel Gabriel. It is divided into a number of *suras*, or chapters, and contains many legends and traditions helping the Arabs to absorb the teachings.

Besides the *Quran*, the life of a Muslim is guided by the *sunna*, the practices of the Prophet, and the *Hadees*, the sayings of the Prophet. These set standards for correct behaviour.

Arab Empire

Nearly all Arabia had accepted the new religion and become a unified state before the death of Prophet Muhammad in A.D. 632. From Arabia, Islam spread very fast to many other parts of the world. Within about a hundred years, the Khalifas and their generals, had conquered Iran, Syria, Egypt, Central Asia, north Africa and Spain. The Arabs had also come to India. Wherever the Arabs went, their religion went with them. This astonishingly rapid conquest was due to several causes. It was partly missionary zeal, but economic and social causes favoured the expansion. The Arabs, who were the inhabitants of a poor country, wanted richer lands. They were excellent fighters. The people of the neighbouring countries, tired of oppressive rule and fascinated by the simplicity of the teachings of Islam, welcomed the invaders. The Arab empire was the largest that the world had so far seen.

The first three Khalifas ruled from the city of Medina. Then the capital was shifted Kufah near ancient Babylon. By A.D. 660, when the Omayyad dynasty took over the reins of government, the principal city was Damascus. About 750, the Omayyads were overthrown by the Abbasids, who made Baghdad their capital. Harun Rashid, famous in many legends, was an Abbasid ruler. The Abbasids ruled for about 300 years, till the Seljuk Turks took Baghdad and ended the Arab rule. During the next four centuries, the Turks dominated the Islamic world. In the 15th century, most of these territories came under the domination of the Ottoman Turks. It was the Ottomans who took Constantinople and ended the Byzantine empire in 1453.

Arab Contributions

The Arabs must not be looked upon as mere conquerors. In fact, the Arab civilization was far superior to that of Europe in those centuries. In the pre-Islamic period of their history, the Arabs were illiterate and unfamiliar with the art of writing. At the time of the rise of Islam, it is said, there were only 17 persons in the entire tribe of Quraish who were able to write. United by Islam, the Arabs started on their quest of knowledge. They sought knowledge wherever they could find it. One of the traditions of the Prophet makes it the bounden duty of every Muslim to seek knowledge. The establishment of a vast empire facilitated the coming together of intellectual and scientific traditions of various civilizations, particularly Greek, Iranian and Indian. The Arabs made all knowledge their own and developed it further. Their knowledge of science was the most advanced in their time. They borrowed knowledge of medicine from Greece and India, and their system of medicine is still called *Yunani*, which means 'Greek'.

The Arabs produced some great physicians. An Arab scientist, Al Razi, known in Europe as Rhazes, discovered

5.10 A page from a 14th century translation of Ibn Sina's work on medicine. The illustrations show patients being examined and treated.

the true nature of smallpox, and Ibn Sina, famous in medieval Europe by the name Avicenna, discovered that tuberculosis is infectious. He also described several diseases of the nervous system. The Arabs made great advances in the knowledge of the origin of plague, ailments of the eyes, the spread of infections, and in the organization of hospitals.

In mathematics, the Arabs learned the Indian numerals and spread their use far and wide, so that in the West they are to this day called Arabic numerals. They improved upon the existing knowledge of algebra, trigonometry, and chemistry. Omar Khayyam is known to us as a great poet, but people of medieval times knew him as a mathematician. He devised a calendar which is more accurate than the Gregorian calendar used in most countries of the world today. The Arab astronomers thought it possible that the earth rotates on its axis and revolves round the sun, while people in Europe stuck to the belief that the earth was the centre of the universe. Arab experiments in chemistry let to the discovery of many new compounds like sodium carbonate, silver nitrate, and nitric and sulphuric acid.

The Arab achievements in philosophy were equally significant. Through Iran and Syria, the Arabs inherited the knowledge and intellectual traditions of Greece. Ibn Sina was recognized as a philosopher in Europe; Abu Al-Walid Mohammad Ibn Rushd, whom Europeans called Averroes, was famous in both the Islamic world and Europe. The Arab civilization, in fact, became the main link between the ancient civilizations and the modern world.

5.11 The arcaded hall of the Mosque at Cordova in Spain. The construction started in A.D. 786

The Islamic literature in the medieval period was inspired largely by Iran. Some of the famous works of the period are the *Rubaiyat* by Omar Khayyam, *Shahnama* by Al-Firdausi, and the *Arabian Nights*, a collection of 1001 stories. The *Rubaiyat* and the *Arabian Nights* tell us much about the culture and society of the period.

Arab art was influenced by Byzantine and Iranian arts, but the Arabs developed their own decorative designs. Their buildings had bulblike domes, small minarets, horse-shoe arches and twisted columns.

The characteristics of Arab architecture can be seen in the mosques, libraries, palaces, hospitals and schools of the period. The Arabs also developed a decorative style of writing called *calligraphy* and made book-illumination an art.

Arab carpets, leather work, beautiful swords, silks, inlays, metal-work, and enamelled glassware were prized everywhere. The Arabs were great traders and carried their goods far and wide.

Their caravans travelled to India and China; their ships went to the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. The Arabs were the greatest mariners and explorers of the period.

Arab Society

The Khalifa was the all-powerful religious leader and the highest political authority in the Arab empire. Then came noblemen of varying status. Below them were scholars, writers, merchants and professional men, such as physicians, *qazis* and teachers. The lowest class was composed of peasants and artisans.

Slaves were numerous and were bought and sold in the open market. A rich man showed his wealth and importance by the number of slaves who attended on him.

Women were confined to their homes, but that did not always mean that they were not taught to read and write, or that they were considered inferior beings.

INDIA IN MEDIEVAL TIMES

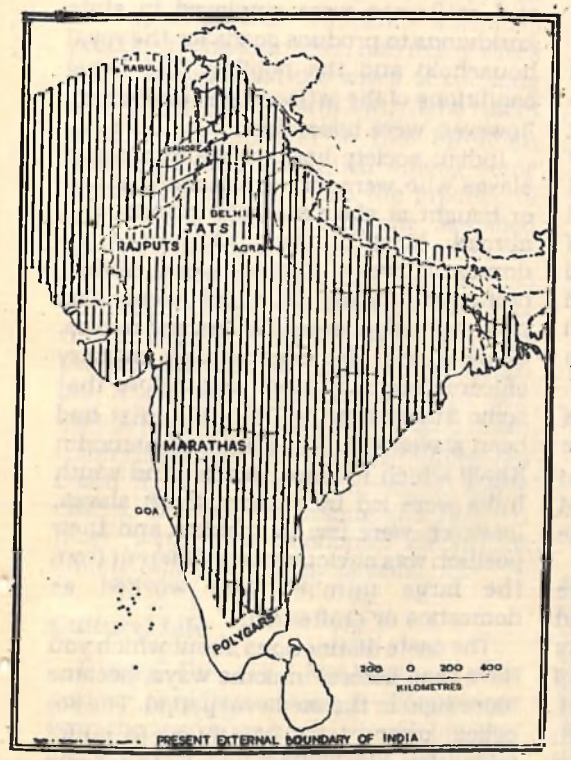
Political Developments

As the Gupta empire grew weak, a number of kingdoms arose in north India. They fought one another, and though some of them became quite powerful for a time, none of them succeeded in establishing its supremacy. The period from the eighth to the tenth century in north India and Deccan was dominated mainly by three kingdoms—the Pala, the Pratihara and the Rashtrakuta. Of these, the Rashtrakuta kingdom was the most powerful. There also arose a number of Rajput states in north India, particularly after the decline of the Pratiharas. These states were continuously involved in wars with one another, though some of them such as the Chauhans of Ajmer, the Gahadavalas of Kanauj and the Paramars of Malwa established powerful kingdoms.

The most powerful kingdom to emerge in India after the Guptas was that of the Cholas. The Chola kings subdued the Pallavas. After defeating the Pandya and Chera rulers, they established their domination over almost the entire peninsular India from the late tenth to the twelfth centuries. The Chola armies also marched across Orissa into Bengal where they defeated the local rulers. The Cholas had a powerful navy. They conquered Sri Lanka,which they occupied for about 50 years,and the Maldives. They also sent an expedition against the Sailendra empire, which then dominated Malaysia and Indonesia, and conquered some areas of that empire. A number of kingdoms arose in Deccan and south India after the Chola power declined in the thirteenth century.

The Turks established their empire, the Sultanat of Delhi, early in the thirteenth century. The Sultanat lasted about 200

years. During the rule of the Khalji and Tughlaq dynasties in the fourteenth century, almost entire north India was brought under one rule. Deccan and parts of south India were also conquered by the Delhi Sultans. During this period the Mongols had overrun large parts of Asia and Europe and had established their rule over China. India was also threatened by Mongol invasions for some time.



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Based upon Survey of India map with the permission of the Surveyor General of India
The territorial waters of India extend into the sea to a distance of twelve nautical miles measured from the appropriate base line

The Mughal Empire in about A.D. 1700

From the middle of the fourteenth century, for about 200 years, the political history of the Deccan and south India was dominated by Bahmani and Vijayanagar kingdoms. In north India, there were a large number of small states which emerged after the decline of the Delhi Sultanat. This period, though one of political disunity, was significant from the point of view of cultural development.

From the middle of the sixteenth century, an all-India empire once again began to be built. The process of building an all-India empire started during the reign of Akbar, when most of north India and large parts of Deccan were brought under the Mughal empire. It reached its highest point during the reign of Aurangzeb in the second half of the seventeenth century when almost the entire country was brought under one rule. During the reign of Aurangzeb, the disintegration of the Mughal empire also began. By early eighteenth century India was once again divided into a number of big and small states. The decline of the Mughal empire is usually taken to mark the end of the medieval period of Indian history. By then, new elements had entered the Indian scene. These were the European trading companies. One of them—the English East India Company—emerged supreme by about the middle of the eighteenth century and during the next hundred years established its rule over India.

Social and Economic Life

The medieval Indian economy, like the

economy in other medieval societies, was agricultural. The produce of the peasants was the primary source of revenue of the states, big or small. The revenue demand on the peasants, that is the share of the peasants' produce which was taken away by others—by the state and various intermediaries between the state and the peasants—was sometimes as high as 50 per cent. Naturally, the lot of the peasants was not a happy one. There was a hierarchy of persons who shared the land revenue. These included 'rajas' or 'rais' who retained some of their rights even after their territories became part of larger kingdoms and empires, zamindars and village headmen who had their own land holdings and also had the responsibility of collecting land revenue for the state, and others who had been given grants of land by the rulers. During most of the medieval period, salaries to the nobles and high officials of the state were not paid in cash. They were paid through assignments of land, that is, lands from which the expected revenue would be equivalent to their salary. All these groups of people did not cultivate the lands themselves. Some of them lived in great luxury.

After an initial period of decline, there was a revival of crafts and of trade and commerce in medieval India. A number of cities became important as centres of trade. Some of these cities were Delhi, Agra, Multan, Lahore, Ahmadabad, Dacca, Surat, Khambat (Cambay) and Burhanpur. They won the highest praise from the European travellers visiting India. Some of these cities were bigger than the biggest cities of Europe at that time. Indian goods were prized everywhere and had a big market in foreign countries. Besides cotton, woollen and silk textiles, indigo and saltpetre were the chief articles of export. Indian merchants who controlled the trade in Indian goods were very prosperous. Later, European trading companies entered the scene. They came to dominate India's foreign trade and interfere in the political affairs of the country. The state, particularly under the Sultans and the Mughal emperors, also promoted crafts and thousands of artisans and craftsmen were employed in state *karkhanas* to produce goods for the royal household and the nobility. The living conditions of the artisans and craftsmen, however, were miserable.

Indian society had a large number of slaves who were either prisoners of war or bought at slave markets in India and abroad. Most of them were used for domestic work. Some were skilled craftsmen. Some of them were also personal bodyguards of rulers and nobles. Some slaves also became high military officers. You may have read before that some Sultans of the Delhi Sultanat had been slaves and that armies of Alauddin Khalji which invaded Deccan and south India were led by a slave. Such slaves, however, were few in number and their position was obviously very different from the large number who worked as domestics or craftsmen.

The caste distinctions about which you have read before, in some ways, became more rigid in the medieval period. The so-called lower castes continued to suffer from the disabilities which the caste system imposed on them. There was a proliferation of *jatis* based on occupations. The period also saw the emergence of new castes. This happened as a result of the assimilation of foreigners, who during the last centuries of the ancient period had settled in India, in the Hindu social organization. Rajputs emerged as an

important new caste during this period. The Hindu religious reformers attacked the oppressive nature of the caste system and many Bhakti saints of the period belonged to the so-called lower castes. There was a further deterioration in the position of women. There was a tendency for the marriageable age of girls to be lowered. Sati– the burning of the widow on the pyre of her husband–was also practised. The king often had many wives and sometimes all the wives of the king who died had to perform sati. Some rulers tried to put an end to this inhuman practice, but it continued among some sections. There was also the practice of secluding women among the so-called upper castes, and the use of *purdah*.

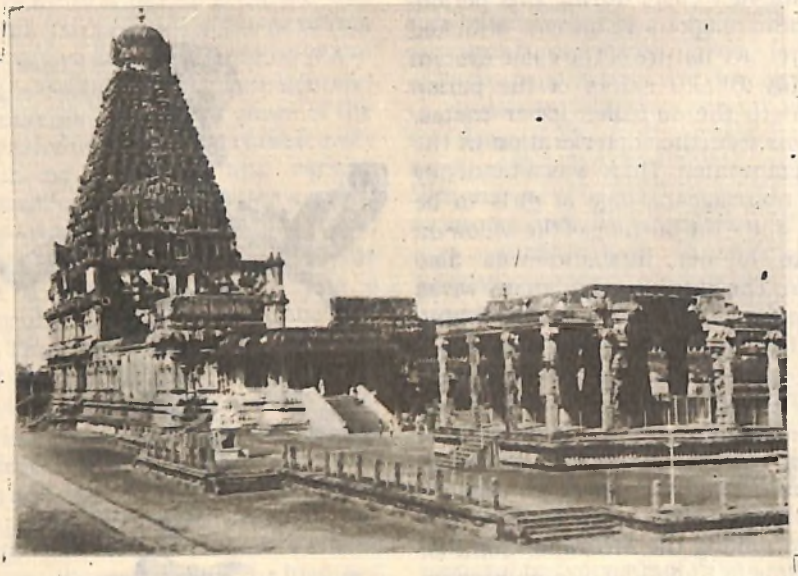
Something like a caste system also developed among the Muslims. Some of the Muslims in India had originally come from outside India, from Central Asia, Iran and Afghanistan. They formed their own exclusive groups. They also looked down upon those who had become converts to Islam from among the so-called lower castes. Besides, as among the Hindus, there were wide economic disparities among different groups of Muslims.

5.12 Bronze image of Natraja of the Chola period.

Cultural Life

During the early centuries of this period, Buddhism almost disappeared from the land of its birth, though many of its beliefs were absorbed into Hinduism. Jainism also declined, though it continued, for some time, to be important in parts of southern and western India. Shankaracharya was the leading philosopher in this period who re-established the influence of the Vedanta school of philosophy throughout the country. He also played an important role in diminishing the influence of Buddhism and Jainism. The most important feature of Hindu religion was the growing popularity of the worship of Vishnu and Shiva, and later, also of Shakti in the form of Kali, Durga and other goddesses. The Alvar and Nayanar saints played an important role in popularizing Bhakti– the path of devotion to God as a means to attain salvation in parts of southern India. In later centuries, Bhakti became popular all over the country.

A development of great significance in this period was the advent of Islam in India. India's first contacts with Islam began through Arab traders soon after its rise in Arabia. Later, it spread to many



5.12a A view of the Brihadeswara temple at Thanjavur

5.12b A view of the Sun Temple at Konark

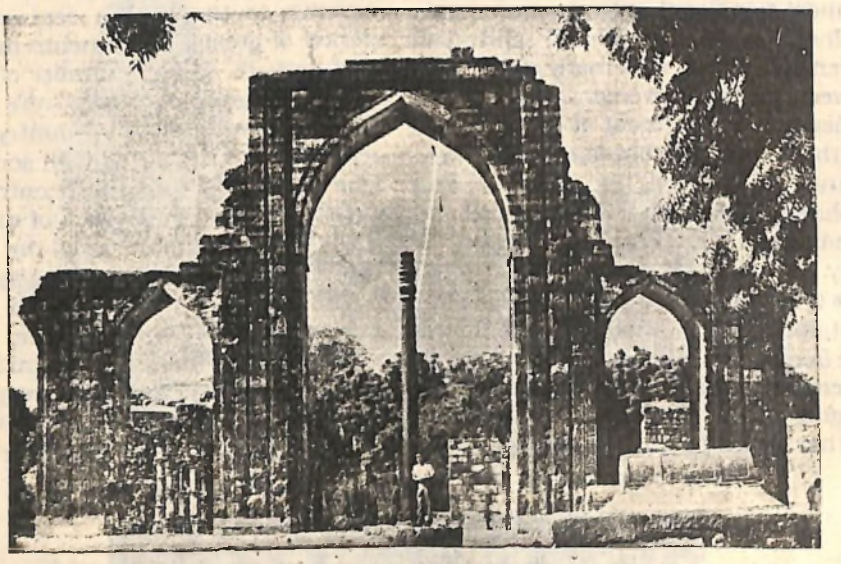
parts of India after the Turks who had embraced Islam and established their rule over large parts of India. In course of time, Islam became the second most popular religion in India.

From the thirteenth century onwards, the most significant religious movements in India were the Bhakti and Sufi movements. There were many similarities between the two movements, though the former was a movement of Hindu saints and the latter of Muslim saints. Both were against formalism in religion and emphasized love and devotion to God and human brotherhood. Both strove for unity. The Bhakti saints attacked the caste system and rituals and, as has been mentioned before, many Bhakti saints came from the so-called lower castes. These movements played an important role in bringing the people of all communities together. A significant development in this period was the rise of a new religion—Sikhism. It arose as a result of the fusion of many ideas of Hinduism and Islam. The Sikh scripture *Adi Granth* contains compositions of Bhakti and Sufi saints.

The early medieval period from the seventh to the twelfth century was a period of great achievements in art and architecture. A large number of temples with their specific styles were built in different parts of the country. These temples were decorated with sculptures. One of the most important contributions of this period is in the field of sculpture. Particularly notable are the bronze sculptures of the Cholas. This was also the period when most modern Indian languages began to take shape.

The establishment of the Delhi Sultanat marked the beginning of a new phase in India's cultural development. The Turks brought with them the cultural traditions

5.13 An image from the 13th century Hoysala temple at Belur in Karnataka

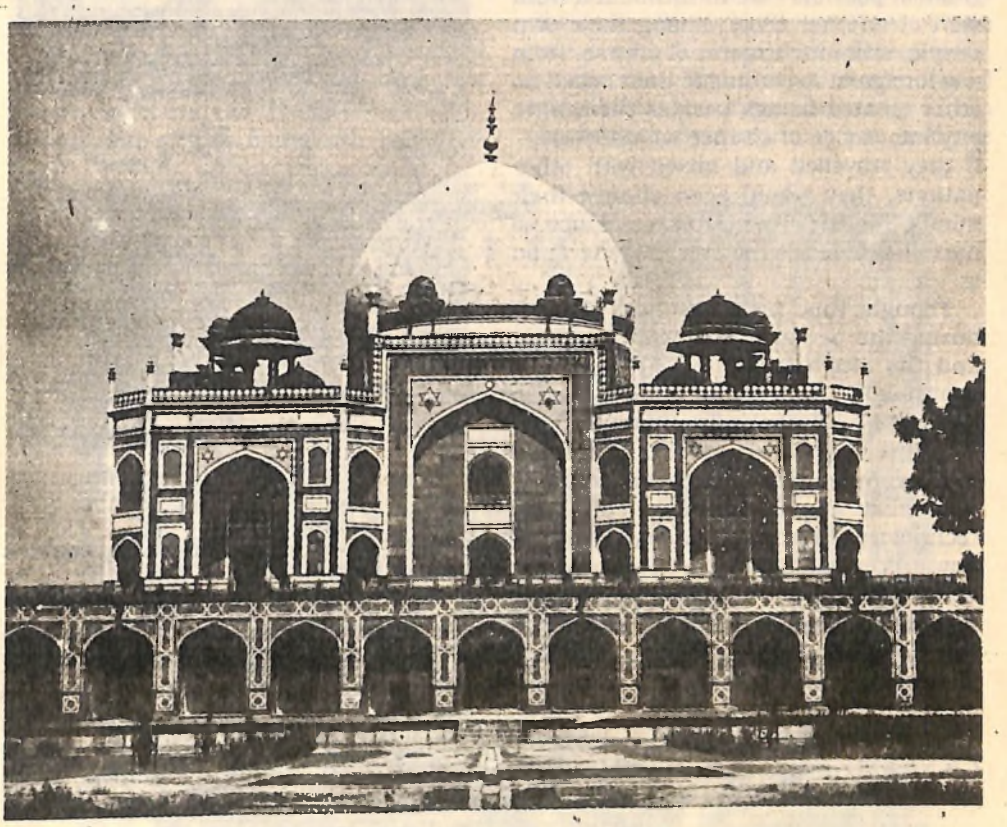


5.14 Arches of the Quwwat-ul-Islam Mosque, Delhi

of Arabia, Central Asia and Iran. The mixing of these traditions, with the earlier Indian traditions led to the emergence of new styles in architecture and art, music and literature. A new composite culture began to take shape in the country, which reached its zenith in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries under the Mughals. Some of the most magnificent monuments of Indian architecture were built during this period. Modern Indian languages and literature in these languages also developed during this period. Besides Sanskrit, Persian became the most important language of administration as well as of learning in most parts of India. Another language, Arabic, was the language of Islamic theological learning. A new language, Urdu, developed in the urban centres of north India and Deccan. In music, new instruments and new *ragas* were introduced. Under the Mughals, the art of painting developed as a major art form and it influenced many later schools of painting in India. New forms of literary writings developed besides devotional

literature in various languages. A large number of historical works were written in this period.

In India, developments of a similar type failed to take place. One of the conspicuous weakneses of Indian society



5.15 Humayun's tomb, Delhi

There were some weaknesses in India's social and cultural development because of which later India was left behind by certain other countries of the world. You will read about certain developments in the next chapter, which began to take place in Europe in the fifteenth century which can be said to have marked the beginning of modern age of world history.

was its insularity, that is, its lack of relationship with other cultures, in the early medieval period. Indians became unaware of the developments taking place outside India. Travel across the seas began to be considered a sin. About the attitude of India's men of learning, Albiruni, a scholar who came from Central Asia to India in the early eleventh century, in his

book on India wrote, "They are haughty, foolish, vain, self-centered, stolid. They are by nature niggardly in communicating that which they know, and they take the greatest possible care to withhold it from men of another caste among their own people, still much more, of course, from any foreigner. According to their belief, no other created beings besides them have any knowledge of science whatsoever.... If they travelled and mixed with other nations, they would soon change their minds, for their ancestors were not so narrow-minded as the present generation is."

Though this insularity was broken during the period of the Delhi Sultanat and the Mughal empire, the emphasis continued to be laid on past learning. In the field of philosophy, for example, there was little new thinking and scholars only wrote commentaries on old texts. There was also a neglect of science and technology. From the sixteenth century onwards, revolutionary developments took place in Europe in science and, later, in technology. Indian rulers and men of learning, however, remained unaware of these developments.

CHINA AND JAPAN IN MEDIEVAL TIMES

CHINA

Political Developments

From the early seventh century, China was ruled by the T'ang dynasty. It gave China an efficient administration with the revival of competitive examinations for state services, tolerance in matters of religion and a flourishing commerce. The rule of

5.16 The Summer Palace of the Manchu Emperors of China, Beijing

the T'ang dynasty (A.D. 618-906) was followed by the Sung dynasty for about 300 years. After this, for about 100 years China was ruled by the Mongols who at this time dominated many parts of Asia and Europe. Under them also China continued to make advances in science and culture.

The rule of the Mongols in China was followed by that of the Ming dynasty which continued for about 300 years. In 1644, China was conquered by the Manchus who continued to rule until A.D. 1911. But the country's political history during the medieval period is not of so much interest as her culture and achievements. In fact, her progress was generally continuous during the long period from the 6th

century to the 19th century when imperialist domination of China began.

Agriculture, Crafts, Trade and Commerce

Agriculture was the principal occupation of the people and they grew chiefly millet and rice, tea and sugarcane. Production of silk increased. Irrigation continued to receive the attention of the rulers, and there was a vast network of canals and dykes. With the invention of the water-wheel, water could be pumped to fields above the level of the canals.

China's foreign trade, which was important under the Hans, was expanded and Chinese goods—especially silk, porcelain and paper—were prized everywhere. Porcelain objects, China's speciality, were valued very highly for their elegance and artistic qualities. China traded with Vietnam, Indonesia, India, Central Asia, Iran, Byzantine empire and many other countries. The route of the caravans to Central Asia, Iran and the Byzantine empire was called the 'Great Silk Route'. Chinese trading towns were situated on the seacoast and on the trade route.

5.17 The living style of China's high officials

China imported large quantities of spices, sandalwood, ivory and fine textiles.

To prevent drain on the country's wealth, the Sung rulers started the use of paper money. It is no surprise today to find paper currency used for actual money everywhere, but it was unheard of when the Chinese began it. But the Ming rulers discouraged China's trade with the outside world after the 15th century and did not even allow their subjects to travel freely overseas. Trade was restricted mainly to the port of Canton. Restrictions on contacts with the outside world were harmful to Chinese progress.

The life of the common people in medieval China was generally very hard. The peasants spent their entire time working in the fields. A large part of their produce was taken by the tax-collectors, and they were made to do forced labour building fortresses and palaces. In medieval times, large estates passed into the hands of high officials and military officers who took for themselves as much as two-thirds of the peasants' produce. If the crops failed, thousands died of starvation. Sometimes, the peasants revolted against their cruel treatment.

The richer Chinese lived a life of ease in palatial houses. They despised work and developed strange customs— for example, the growing of long fingernails, which they capped with silver.

Chinese Achievements in Art and Science

In spite of the terrible conditions of the Chinese people as a whole, medieval China made progress in many aspects of human endeavour. From very early times, the Chinese knew the magnetic properties of lodestone. In the medieval period they applied this knowledge to the making of the mariner's compass. It consisted of a magnetized piece of iron shaped like a fish floating in water. The Chinese invention of gunpowder, during this period, was another great achievement. They called gunpowder the 'fire drug' and used it first for fireworks. The invention of gunpowder was made in China in the 10th century, about 400 years before the knowledge reached the Western world

Other Chinese advances included instruments for astronomical observations, mechanical clocks, and improvements in the smelting of iron and steel. The Chinese made ironchain suspension bridges as early as the 10th century and devised the first method of printing. In the beginning, they cut what they wanted to print on blocks of wood, applied ink and impressed as many copies as they wanted. Later, in the 11th century, they invented a movable type consisting of separate characters. These characters were made first of clay and later of metal. With this improvement more books could be printed and made available to a large number of people. The importance of this invention for the spread of knowledge was as great as the invention of paper.

The rich literature in history, fiction and poetry which had been accumulating since ancient times grew richer. The nature of the Chinese script, the use of brush and of rolls of silk and paper for writing furthered the growth of painting. Chinese architecture, which scholars say is based on their conception of the Buddhist *stupa*, can be studied in the many pagodas which they built. The spread of Buddhism gave a great impetus to sculpture.

Buddhism at one time had become so widespread as to be the main religion of China. However, with the revival of Confucianism, Buddhism gradually became less popular. Taoism and especially ancestor worship continued to hold sway over people's lives.

JAPAN

Political Developments

In the history of Asia, Japan occupies a unique position. Japan was able to escape from European imperialist conquest and was the first country in Asia to take to the path of modern industrial development. Having escaped imperialist domination, Japan herself became an imperialist country. You will read about these developments later.

The historical development of Japan has many unique features. The country consists of hundreds of small islands of which four are major islands—Hokkaido, Honshu, Kyushu and Shikoku. The Japanese islands are separated from the Asian mainland by a distance of about 150 kilometres. While this has not obstructed contacts between Japan and its neighbours, it has allowed the Japanese to live in isolation from the rest of the world for long periods of time.

Almost the entire country was unified into a single state by about the seventh century A.D. In the eighth century, Nara became the capital of the Japanese state as well as a centre of Japanese culture and civilization. Later in the same century, the capital was shifted to Kyoto and that city remained the seat of the emperors of Japan for over 1000 years. The real power, however, was in the hands of an aristocratic family. Towards the end of the twelfth century, a new political institution came into being—that of the Shogun. The Shogun or the 'General' became the commander of Japan's army and ruled Japan, while the emperor remained at his capital at Kyoto. The office of the Shogun became hereditary. Until 1867, the Shoguns were the real rulers of Japan.

The next major phase of Japan's history began early in the 17th century when Tokugawa Ieyasu became the Shogun. He was the founder of the Tokugawa dynasty. The Tokugawas established a strong state and ruled the country from Edo (modern

5.18 Tokugawa Ieyasu

Tokyo) till 1867 when the last Shogun was overthrown, the emperor was restored and Japan launched herself on the road of industrial development, modernization and expansion.

Social and Economic Conditions

The political development of Japan was closely connected with the conflicts over the possession of landed estates. In the earlier period, there were a large number of private estates which were worked upon by serfs. The lords of these estates were exempted from taxes to the central government. The state also owned large areas of land but due to the heavy burden of taxation, peasants deserted these lands. The state then distributed its land to the Samurai or the warriors, who were somewhat similar to the knights of western Europe. Thus, there emerged various land-owning groups in Japanese society. The Buddhist monasteries also owned large estates. The peasants were reduced to the status of serfs as they were bound to the land and could not abandon it. They had to part with sometimes as much as two-thirds of their produce in the from of tax and rent. Many peasant revolts are recorded in Japanese history. The Tokugawa rulers introduced state ownership of land and distributed it to about 150 lords called Daimyos. These Daimyos were kept under strict control by the Shogun but were more or less free within their domains and were allowed to maintain vast armies.

5.19 A Samurai

The Tokugawa Shoguns organized society on rigid hierarchical lines. The membership in a group was hereditary as in the case of caste system. At the top were the Samurai or the warriors. The Samurai were, however, a heterogeneous group which included the Daimyos, officials and ordinary soldiers. The Samurai in theory enjoyed many privileges but those belonging to the last category, the ordinary soldiers, were not always a privileged group. When they were without a master, their condition was miserable. Next in hierarchy came the farmers who were generally oppressed mercilessly and had to perform forced labour for the lord, besides paying taxes and rent. The third in the hierarchy were artisans and craftsmen. The last group was that of merchants. With the growth in trade and industry, the actual position of the

merchants rose in society, though in theory their status was the lowest in the hierarchy. In fact, the landlords increasingly became debtors to the merchants. As in Indian society, there were also outcastes. The social and economic system of Japan in medieval times had many common features with feudalism about which you have read before.

The development of crafts and industries resulted in the growth of many towns and cities. Growth of trade, inland and foreign, also contributed to the growth of towns and cities. Copper currency was introduced and there was an increasing use of money. The Japanese exports in this period consisted mainly of copper ore, gold and silver. Under the Tokugawas, the state took over foreign trade in its own hands. They, however, followed a policy of isolation from the world. No person was allowed to leave Japan. Foreigners were thrown out. Only a few Dutch traders were allowed to remain and carry on limited trade. These measures cut off Japan from the rest of the world almost completely.

Culture and Religion

Many aspects of Japanese life in the early period were influenced by the Chinese civilization. From very early times, Japan maintained close links with the Chinese civilization. The most lasting Chinese impact was on the Japanese script. The Japanese language is very different from the Chinese, but the Japanese script is borrowed from China. Japanese adopted this script in about A.D. 400 and added phonetic symbols to it.

The early Japanese literature also was influenced by the Chinese literature. However, gradually a distinctive Japanese literature began to develop, beginning with writing of myths, histories and poems. Women of aristocratic families were particularly notable for writing poems and novels, some of which have become very famous. The most unique contribution of medieval Japan to literature was a form of poetry called Haiku. Haiku poems are short poems of 17 syllables which use highly subtle imagery and for their proper appreciation demand a highly refined taste on the part of the reader. Closely associated with literature was the theatre called Kabuki that developed in medieval Japan. This form has deeply influenced the development of modern theatre in many parts of the world. The accomplishments of medieval Japan in various other forms of art are also very impressive. In sculpture, painting, music and dance and in crafts such as pottery, fabrics, lacquerware, the Japanese artists and craftsmen excelled. Another peculiarly Japanese art, Ikebana or 'the art of flower arrangement', which is being imitated throughout the world, also developed in the medieval period. The chief characteristic of the medieval Japanese art can be summed up in one word – elegance.

The old religion of Japan is known as Shintoism. This religion consists mainly of the worship of the forces of nature. Buddhism reached Japan early in the sixth century from China through Korea and during the course of centuries it became widespread. In certain periods it even eclipsed Shintoism. Buddhism has been an important influence in the growth of Japanese culture. Japanese scholars and priests went to China to study the Buddhist scriptures. Gradually, they developed their own distinct schools of Buddhism, the most famous of which is Zen Buddhism. This school lays great

stress on meditation rather than on the study of scriptures and observance of rituals.

The word Zen is derived from *dhyana*, the Sanskrit word for meditation. Buddhism had a deep influence on the growth of Japanese art, in the building of monasteries, temples and sculpture. Great resources were spent on the construction of huge Buddhist temples.

One of the temples built in the eighth century in Nara had a hall which was about 95 metres long, 55 metres wide and 50 metres high. The bronze image of the Buddha that is housed in this temple is about ten metres high.

Christianity reached Japan in the 16th century and within a short time many Japanese became converts to this religion. The Tokugawa rulers, who followed a policy of secluding Japan from the rest of the world, were suspicious of Christianity, and it was banned in the early 17th century. Many Christians were killed and the others were forced to abandon their faith.

The cultural achievements of the Japanese people in medieval times laid the foundations of the growth of modern Japanese culture. The social and economic system of medieval Japan, however, was based on oppression and this, combined with the policy of seclusion followed by many rulers of Japan, had many ill effects on the growth of social, economic and political institutions.

The term 'Middle Ages' does not cover a uniform period for all the countries of the world. For Europe and the western world, the Middle Ages are generally considered to be the period between A.D. 500 and A.D. 1500. In the East the Middle Ages may be said to have continued long after they had ended in the West. Throughout these years great advances were made in the arts. There was much intermingling of peoples and all cultures were enriched by this process. The Arabs, whose civilization was the most advanced in this period, made great contributions to the growth of knowledge. The spread of this knowledge to Europe was an important factor in creating the Renaissance to be discussed in the next chapter.

For India, this was a period of cultural enrichment. The forces of modernization, however, were to develop later in the East than in many parts of the West. Long after the period had ended in the West, the East was still in its 'Middle Ages'.

EXERCISES

Things to know

1. Explain the meaning of the terms 'ancient', 'medieval' and 'modern' as used in describing periods of time in this Chapter.
2. Which of the ancient civilization ruled over most of the territory that became the Byzantine empire in the medieval period?
3. Describe the classes in European society under the feudal system. What new class began to develop in the later years of the Middle Ages? Why?
4. How would you have spent most of your time in feudal days if you had been any of the following?
   Knight, serf, lord of the manor, freeman, monk, samurai.

5. Identify the following men:
Pope Urban II, Timur, Constantine, Al Razi, Charlemagne, Omar Khayyam, Balban, Ibn Sina, Ieyasu.

Things to do

1. Imagine yourself a 'world traveller', say, around A.D. 800, to China, Japan, western Asia, western Europe. Prepare notes you might have kept in your travel diary about people's religion, their houses, buildings, work, or other points of interest. Mention some of the things you purchased-- especially in China and Arabia.
2. Make a list of new products, discoveries or improvements made by man during the medieval period. Where, or by what civilization, was each made?
3. Write a paper of 250-300 words entitled 'What the Medieval West Learned from the East'.

Things to think about and discuss

1. Why did the first centuries of medieval times in western Europe come to be known as the Dark Ages?
2. Man's interests in trade and religion have often gone hand in hand throughout history. What examples of this do you find in medieval times?
3. Why is it uncomplimentary today to call a people's society or its way of life 'feudalistic'?
4. It is said that the Church kept learning alive in medieval Europe and it also sometimes said that the Church prevented advances in learning. Cite proof of the truth of both statements.
5. When, *approximately*, did the medieval period end in the West and in the East? According to what you know about 'change in man's progress' why is it difficult to say exactly when one period of history ends and another begins?
6. Compare the social and economic system of western Europe with the systems that prevailed in India, west Asia and Japan in the medieval times. What were the similarities and dissimilarities between them ? Discuss.
7. Why did many societies in the medieval times cut themselves off from the rest of the world? What must have been, in your opinion, the effects of this on those societies?

CHAPTER 6

Beginning of the Modern Age

A NUMBER of interrelated developments took place in the period from about the fourteenth to about the seventeenth century which laid the foundations of the modern world. The dominant role in these developments was played by some countries of Europe but they had their impact on the entire world.

You read in the last chapter that towards the end of the Middle Ages many changes were going on in Europe. These changes undermined the feudal system of society, which began to disintegrate. With the disintegration of the feudal system, a new type of social system began to emerge in Europe which affected every aspect of life and marked the beginning of the modern age. One of the first developments that marked the beginning of a new era was the *Renaissance*. The term 'Renaissance' means rebirth and is used to describe the period beginning around A.D. 1300 when there was a new interest in the learning of ancient Greece and Rome. But the Renaissance was much more than that. It embraced ideas and achievements in philosophy, art, literature, religion, politics and science which had little to do with the ideas and achievements of ancient Greece and Rome.

Another interrelated development was the *Reformation*. The term 'Reformation' refers to the movement against certain practices of the Catholic Church and the authority of the Pope. The Reformation led to the rise of Protestantism and the setting up of Protestant Churches from the early 16th century and to Catholic Reformation in the late 16th century. These two developments, along with the social and economic changes that had started within the feudal society, brought about the collapse of the feudal order.

Another development which marked the beginning of the modern age in Europe was a series of 'voyages of discovery'. Helped by some remarkable inventions, daring sailors sailed for distant lands. They were financed by rulers and merchants who sponsored the costly voyages of the sea-farers for the profits that the voyages would bring. The discoveries of the sea-farers extended

man's knowledge about the world and the old maps which were both inaccurate and incomplete had to be redrawn.

There were major changes in political life which set the trend of political developments for a long time to come. Nation-states began to emerge. Strong rulers rose and subjugated feudal lords, ignored the authority of the Pope in political matters and soon succeeded in establishing kingdoms which they ruled as they pleased. The political system that developed in these kingdoms was 'absolutist' in character, with the king emerging as an absolute ruler.

The last development of which you will read in this chapter is the struggle against absolute monarchies in Europe, particularly in England which led to the overthrow of the absolute monarchy and the beheading of the king. Though the monarchy was later restored, the real political power in England passed into the hands of Parliament.

The developments described in this chapter formed the bases of the developments in the 18th and 19th centuries which were characterized by the growth of industrial capitalism, democracy and nationalism.

Disintegration of the Feudal System

You have already read about some of the changes which were taking place in European societies in the Middle Ages. The revival of trade was accompanied by the growth of towns. Old towns became larger and many new towns emerged, mainly as centres of manufacture and trade. Towns, often walled, gradually freed themselves from feudal control. They had their own governments and the townsmen elected their officials. They had their own militia and their own courts. Unlike the serfs, there were no restrictions on their movements. They could come and go as they pleased and buy and sell property. There is an old proverb which says, 'Town air makes a man free'. Towns provided asylum to serfs who escaped from feudal oppression. The towns encouraged the cultivation of cash crops needed for manufactures, and peasants received their payments in money. The peasants could now pay their dues to the lord in cash rather than by labour.

With the growth of trade, there was increasing use of money. Money had little use in feudal societies. A feudal manor was more or less self-sufficient for its needs. There was very little of buying and selling and whatever there was was done through barter. The use of money indicated far-reaching changes in economy. In feudal societies, the indicator of a man's wealth was land. Some people had wealth, particularly the Church and sometimes the nobles, in the form of gold and silver, but it was idle wealth. It could not be used to make more wealth.

With the growth of trade and manufactures, this changed, marking the beginning of the transition from feudal economy to *capitalist* economy in which wealth is used to make a profit. This is done by investing money in business, in trade and industry. The profits made are re-invested to make further profits. Such wealth or money is called 'capital'. Money, not the landed property, increasingly became the measure of a man's wealth. In feudal societies, there were three classes of people: the prayers, that is, the clergy who prayed, the soldiers or the knights who fought, and workers or the peasants who worked for both the prayers and the soldiers. With the growth of trade a new class emerged— the 'middle class'—

comprising mainly the merchants. Even though small in number, they began to play an important role in society because of the wealth they possessed.

Initially, the trade with other parts of the world was largely in luxury goods from the East and was controlled by merchants of the Italian cities of Venice, Genoa and Pisa, and of towns in southern Germany. With the great geographical discoveries of the last decade of the 15th century—the discovery of the sea-route to the East and the discovery of the Americas—the pattern of trade was changed. It was first dominated by Portugal and Spain and later by Holland and Britain.

Simultaneous with these developments,changes took place in the system of manufacturing goods. In the early medieval period, most of the non-agricultural products required by the peasants were produced in the household of the peasant and by serfs, who were skilled craftsmen, for the lord. With the growth of towns, many of these activities shifted to towns where people skilled in particular crafts organized themselves into 'guilds'. You have read about the guild system before. Each craft guild had master craftsmen, journeymen and apprentices. To learn a craft, a person joined a master as an apprentice or learner. After having learned the craft, he worked as a journeyman with the master on a wage or, if he had mastered the craft, he would himself become a master craftsman. The units of production were small, consisting of three or four people, and each unit had a shop to sell its produce. There were no inequalities within a unit or between units of the same guild. The guild system was not suited to the requirements of large scale production required by an expanding market for goods, and the system began to decline. Inequities appeared within the system. with masters refusing to let journeymen become masters and paying them low wages. With the introduction of 'the putting out system', their independence declined. The merchant, under this system, would bring the master craftsmen the raw materials, the craftsmen would work with their tools as before in their homes and the produce would be taken away by the merchant who had supplied them with raw materials. Thus, in effect, unlike before, the craftsmen did not own what they produced. They were increasingly reduced to the position of wage-earners, except that they still owned the tools used by them and worked at home.

Subsequently, this system gave way to the factory system under which the production was carried out in a building owned by the capitalist with the help of machines also owned by him. The workers, owning nothing, worked only for wages. In industries, such as mining and metal-working, the new system came into being early. The period saw tremendous expansion of manufactures. This was accompanied by a growing differentiation in towns and the emergence of working class.

During the Middle Ages, there were many peasant revolts in different parts of Europe against feudal oppression, from the 14th century onwards. It may be remembered that besides the lords, the Church also owned vast stretches of lands. The Church had, therefore, become a part of the feudal system. The revolts against feudal oppression were, therefore, directed against the Church also. The Church dominated the intellectual life of

Europe and suppressed all new ideas that deviated from the doctrines of the Church. The leaders of rebellious peasants often advocated religious doctrines which were at variance with those of the Church, and they were condemned as heretics.

As a result of these developments, the feudal system broke down. The towns which were free from the control of the lords began to undermine the stability of the feudal society. In course of time, towns became very prosperous. Kings who were quite powerless in the feudal system began to take the help and support of townsmen to increase their power and to enforce their will over the lords. The kings also started having their own armies and thus freed themselves from their earlier dependence on the lords for soldiers.

Thus, feudalism began to decline although it was finally ended in most countries only in the 18th and 19th centuries. In its place, a new system of society began to emerge. Many of the other developments about which you will read in the chapter were also related to this process.

RENAISSANCE

The term 'Renaissance' literally means rebirth and is, in a narrow sense, used to describe the revival of interest in the learning of the classical civilizations of Greece and Rome. This revival first began in Italy when a number of scholars from Constantinople migrated to Italy and a number of Italian scholars went to Constantinople and other cities of the old Byzantine empire in search of Greek classics. As a result, hundreds of classical writings, unknown to Europeans for centuries, were circulating first in Italy and then other parts of Europe. The interest in classical learning and in other achievements of the civilizations of Greece and Rome deeply influenced Europeans. The Renaissance, however, was not, as mentioned earlier, a mere revival of ancient learning and knowledge of the achievements of ancient Greece and Rome. It was marked by a series of new developements in the field of art, literature, religion, philosophy, science and politics.

The Renaissance began in Italy. A very important reason for this was that the revival of trade between Europe and the East had brought the greatest prosperity to Italian cities which virtually controlled this trade. Italy was divided into a number of small states. By early 16th century, there were five main states which controlled most of Italy—Milan, Venice, Florence, Naples and the States of the Church. The Italian cities had grown up in an atmosphere of freedom from feudal control. Freedom encouraged thinking and a spirit of adventure. The rulers of the Italian states were patrons of learning and the arts.

The intellectual and cultural life of Europe for centuries had been dominated by the Catholic Church. The Renaissance undermined this domination. The revival of pre-Christian classical learning and of interest in the cultural achievements of ancient Greece and Rome were, in themselves, also an important factor in undermining the domination of the Church.

Humanism

The chief characteristic of the Renaissance way of thinking was *humanism*. It was the heart and soul of the Renaissance. Basically, it meant a decisive

shift in concern for human as distinct, from divine matters. Humanism was a system of views which extolled man, stressed his essential worth and dignity, expressed deep faith in his tremendous creative potential, and proclaimed freedom of the individual and inalienable rights of the individual. It was centred on the man of flesh and blood with all his earthly joys and sorrows, oppossed to religious asceticism and defended his right to pleasure and the satisfaction of earthly desires and requirements. It meant the glorification of the human and the natural as opposed to the divine and other-worldly. The humanists rejected and even ridiculed religious asceticism, mortification of the flesh and withdrawal from the world. They urged man to seek joy on this earth rather than in an after-life which the Church advocated. Their works were permeated with the faith that a man with an active mind and body was capable of knowing and controlling the world, of performing miracles and fashioning his own happiness. The proper study of Mankind, it was asserted, is Man, Humanity rather than Divinity.

Pico della Mirandola, an Italian humanist of the 15th century, who had travelled widely and had studied various systems of philosophy, published a list of nine hundred theses. In his writings, he expressed the Renaissance belief in the limitless potentialities of man. He wrote, "'There is nothing more wonderful than man'. This is what I have read in some records of the Arabians. A famous Greek said,' A great miracle is man'. What is the reason behind these sayings? Humans are the kings of all beings below God and the angels because of the ability of their reason and the light of their intelligence. But these reasons are not enough. Man is the most fortunate of creatures. Why? Because of all creatures, God did not limit the potential of man. Only humans have freedom of choice and can fashion themselves in whatever shape they prefer." The Renaissance men hungered after more knowledge. They came to feel that human life is important, that man is worthy of study and respect, that there should be efforts to improve life on this earth. Because of this interest in human affairs, the study of literature and history became major areas of study. Literature and history came to be called the 'humanities', which were primarily concerned with understanding the affairs of man in his earthly life, not with life after death.

This new spirit of humanism also found expression in the new art and literature. The Renaissance artists took their subjects from the Bible but portrayed the human form in all its earthly beauty and vigour. The Renaissance writers were also chiefly concerned with man. As Shakespeare wrote:

> What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form, in moving, how express and admirable! in action, how like an angel! in apprehension, how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals !....
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> *Hamlet*, Act II, scene ii

Art and Architecture

Some of the greatest achievements of the Renaissance were made in the realm of painting, sculpture and architecture. The humanism of the Renaissance found brilliant expression in these art forms. The Renaissance artists made use of biblical subjects but the interpretation that they

gave these subjects had little to do with the traditional religious attitude. Art as an independent activity assumed a status which was unknown in medieval times. The purpose of the medieval art was to express moral values and impart religious teachings. The people protrayed were not men and women of flesh and blood. The artists, mostly anonymous, had a low position in society. They worked in groups as craftsmen and had no individuality. The Renaissance marked the rise of artists, each with his unique individuality and style, who enjoyed great prestige in society.

Of all the art forms, the Renaissance's supreme achievements was in painting. The Renaissance artists looked upon art as an imitation of life. This required close observation of nature and of man, of mountains, trees and animals and of the anatomy of man. The artists studied optics and geometry and used their knowledge to develop perspective in their paintings. They studied human anatomy to find the mechanism underlying gestures and expressions. Leonardo da Vinci, one of the greatest geniuses of all time, studied not only the anatomical structure of the human body but also, in

6.1 Leonardo da Vinci's
The Last Supper

order to represent movement, the way different parts of the body shaped when in a state of movement.

Deriving pleasures of the senses from art was recognized as a legitimate purpose of art. In the Renaissance view, the world was a place of beauty and delight. The artists concentrated their attention on the physical aspects of man's existence rather than that of the religious. The depiction of Mary and Christ as a child, which was a very popular theme, depicted Mary and Jesus as loving human beings and not as religious symbols. In the physical world, the artists saw a revelation of beauty and harmony and, seeking perfection in their creations, they painted human figures more beautiful than any creation of nature, a 'new race of man', as they have been called. In the works of the Renaissance artists, perfection was no longer exclusively divine. It was also human.

6.2 Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*

The Renaissance spirit found its full flowering in Italy in the works of three great artists—Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, and Raphael. They were commissioned to produce works of art by Popes and members of the Medici family. Leonardo da Vinci was gifted with many talents. He was a painter, sculptor, engineer, scientist, philosopher, poet, and singer. He even designed an airplane! He has left behind innumerable sketches that illustrate his inventive genius. He is best known for two paintings *The Last Supper* and *Mona Lisa*. Michelangelo's talent as a sculptor rivalled even that of the ancient Greeks. He was also outstanding as a painter and architect. His greatest work in painting was the decoration of the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican. He decorated the ceiling in nine panels, drawing the subjects from Christian mythology but giving it an intense human interpretation. These paintings, for example, *The Last Judgement* and *The Fall of Man*, are among the most famous works of art in the world. Raphael, another Italian painter, lived about the same time as Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo. He is famous for his paintings of the Madonna, the mother of Jesus Christ, and is recognized as one of the world's master painters.

All the early Renaissance artists pictured Christian subjects and covered the walls of churches and palaces with scenes of heaven, hell, and the Last Judgement. Later artists were influenced by the revival of interest in old Greek and Roman mythology and painted themes from Christian literature in Greco-Roman